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# Homebuilding & Renovating

*Britain's  
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Self-build  
Magazine*

*Self-build  
Made Easy!*

Expert Guides to Project Success

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10 Tips for Success

**DESIGN  
SOLUTIONS  
FOR LIVING  
ROOMS**

**WHY BRICK  
IS BACK**

...and How to Get it  
Right on Your Project

**Dream  
Self  
Builds**

How to Create Perfect Spaces from Scratch

**25**  
YEARS

1990-2015

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Issue!*

- *Our Favourite Homes*
- *Best Ever Design Ideas*
- *Revealed: The Home of the Future*
- *...and Much More!*



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Potton publishes a 160 page Self Build Homes Annual which is available from leading Newsagents or direct from the Company, price £2.50

Information Service No. 9

Congratulations to *Homebuilding & Renovating* on its 25th anniversary. Last year Potton celebrated 50 years supplying self-build homes — so we understand the benefits of experience.

Formed as a family business in 1964, Potton rapidly established itself as the leading supplier of timber frame homes in the UK. Acquired by Kingspan in 2006, it has since developed into a company offering a complete self-build solution, with bespoke designs and cutting-edge technology meeting modern demands of energy efficiency.

Wishing to provide additional support to homeowners, Potton went a step further by introducing an education programme for self-builders, the Self Build Academy, which is now a fundamental part of our business.

**Left: Potton's advert in the original issue of *Homebuilding & Renovating*, 1990**





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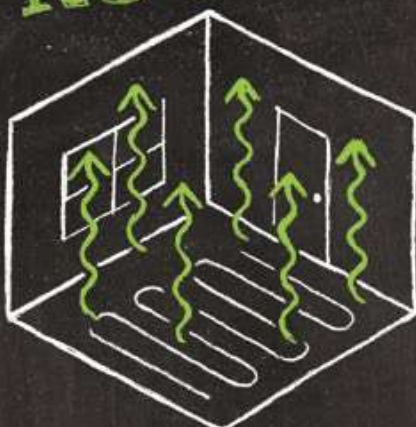
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#### Even Heat

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# Underfloor Heating

## Nu-Heat's experts bust the myths on this popular heating system

Warm water underfloor heating (UFH) is fast becoming one of the most desirable heating systems for a home, with over a third of recent house buyers citing it as a feature they aspire to having, according to the Ask for Underfloor campaign.

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### Myth 1: My property isn't suitable for UFH

Most homes are suitable for UFH, including new properties, as they meet insulation and airtightness guidelines. Older properties can also have UFH, thanks to retrofit solutions that offer higher heat outputs. UFH can even be installed through an existing building into a new extension and added to a radiator circuit to form a hybrid system. There's no need to change your boiler as UFH works with gas, oil and LPG boilers and heat pumps too.

### Myth 2: UFH is disruptive to install

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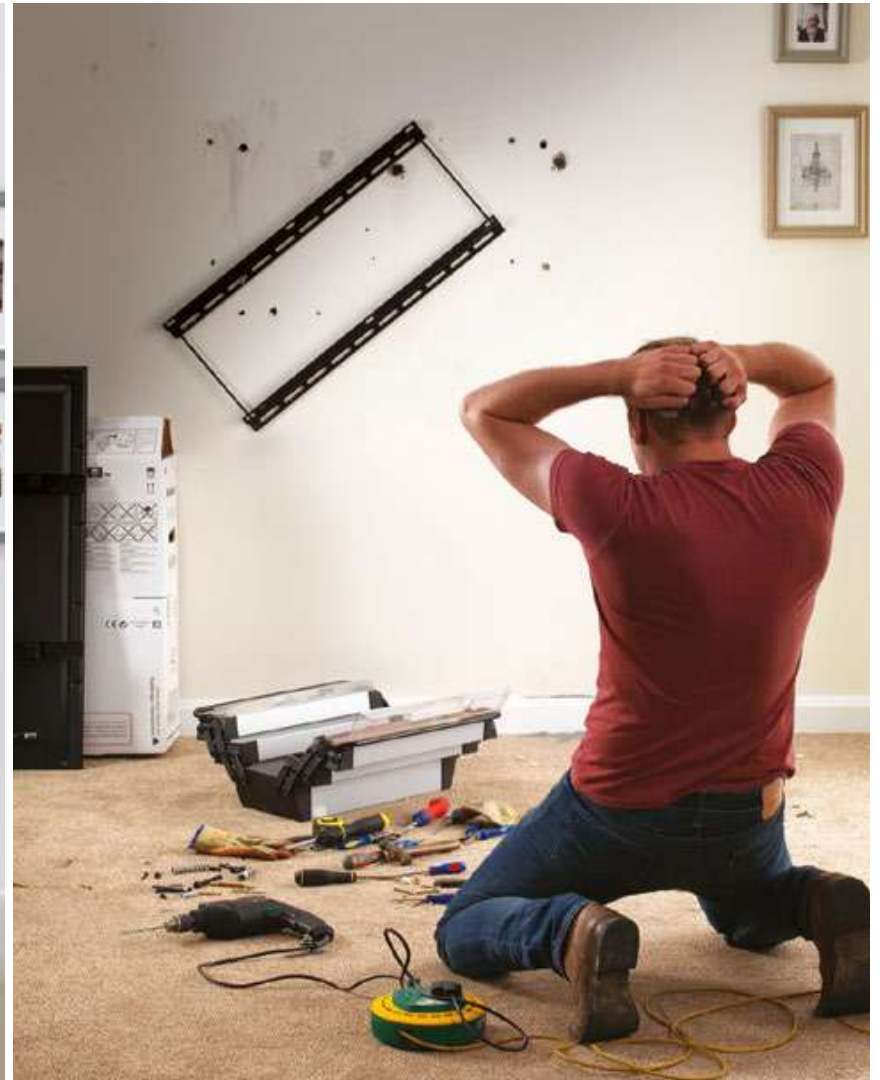
For every project, Nu-Heat provides a bespoke design based on full heat loss calculations for each room, taking into account your chosen floor coverings so you can be confident that the system will always perform. For more information call Nu-Heat on 01404 540650 or visit [nu-heat.co.uk](http://nu-heat.co.uk)







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# 25 YEARS

## Homebuilding &Renovating

### CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

... of Homebuilding & Renovating

- 26 **Happy Birthday to Us!**  
A potted history of your favourite self-build magazine
- 34 **25 Years of Self-build**  
We look back on how far the industry has come
- 44 **HB&R's Favourite Homes**
- 57 **Back to the Future: The Home of 2040**  
We explore what the future has in store for our homes
- 71 **Looking Back with Ken Shuttleworth**  
We sit down with the award-winning architect to talk house design and building one-off homes

### HOME

Projects, advice and inspiration for your home

- 78 **An Oak Frame Self-build**  
A new oak frame home on a semi-rural plot, meticulously designed to be a home for life
- 92 **Five-Minute Expert: Stone Flooring**  
What you need to know before buying
- 96 **A Contemporary-Style New Build**  
A striking single storey home on a garden plot
- 109 **Living Room Design Masterclass**  
How best to plan this much-used space
- 114 **A Barn-Style Package Home**  
One couple complete a fixed-price package build within the Cotswolds
- 129 **Before & After Design**  
A drab bungalow becomes a spacious modern home
- 131 **Quick Ideas For Every Room**  
Nuggets of expert design advice
- 140 **A Listed Barn Conversion**  
A Grade II\* listed medieval barn is saved from ruin and transformed into a characterful home
- 218 **My Big Idea: Corner Glazing**  
How to achieve this design detail







## BUILDING & RENOVATING

Practical advice to help get your project underway

- 159 Can Your Relationship Survive a Self-build?**  
Want to break ground without breaking up? We speak to those in the know and offer advice that could save your project — and marriage!
- 167 10 Ways to Stay on Budget**  
David Snell provides his top tips for keeping on top of your finances and save on costs
- 174 The Rebirth of Brick**  
We explain why brick is fast becoming a cladding option for the contemporary home, and how to use this building material well
- 187 How to Insulate a Dormer Window**  
Dormer windows have traditionally been difficult to insulate to a high level — our expert provides the solution
- 190 A Step-by-Step Guide to Self-build**  
Our complete project schedule

## EVERY MONTH

- 19 Upfront**  
The latest self-build and renovation news, views, products and your projects
- 170 Build Cost Calculator**  
Calculate the cost of building a new home in your region with our up-to-date cost guide
- 215 Source Book**  
A directory of key suppliers for your project, as featured in this issue



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WELCOME NOVEMBER 2015

# Celebrating 25 Years of Helping You

Jason Orme is the Editor of  
*Homebuilding & Renovating*

Every one of our issues is special but this one is more special than others, so to speak. This month marks 25 years since the magazine – then known as *Individual Homes* – was formed, and we're devoting a bit of space in this issue to celebrate the fact. We're looking back at how self-build trends have changed in that time (p.34) and ask experts to predict how things might look in 25 years' time (p.57). We have also picked our favourite homes from the past 25 years (p.44).

As ever, the magazine is packed with plenty of projects, technical and design advice and ideas. We explain the best ways to save money on your project (p.167); and discover that the humble brick (p.174), for so long left behind as the trendy cladding materials (render and timber) dominated modern homes, is enjoying a remarkable renaissance.



On a more light-hearted note (perhaps) is our guide to managing your relationship during building work (p.159) – apparently home renovations make 12 per cent of couples consider divorce! Running a building project requires a lot of balancing of legwork and key decisions – there is a science to it, at least according to the experts we found. Architects often tell me they end up becoming marriage counsellors too.

Enjoy the issue, and here's to the next 25 years... 🍷

---

@JasonPOrme  
homebuilding@centaur.co.uk

Jason Orme is currently rebuilding a 1960s house (described as 'Frank Lloyd Wrong' by HB&R's Contributing Editor Mark Brinkley) and is an experienced self-builder and renovator



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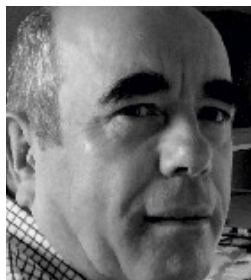
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## MARK BRINKLEY

Mark is the author of *The Housebuilder's Bible* and an experienced builder; he's just bought another plot. He is also a regular expert contributor to *Homebuilding & Renovating*



## PETER HARRIS

Founding Editor and recently retired MD of *Homebuilding & Renovating*, self-builder Peter revisited the birth of the magazine and how things have changed since to celebrate our 25th anniversary



## SIMON MAXWELL

Photographer Simon Maxwell is a member of the British Institute of Professional Photographers and the Royal Photographic Society, and has been photographing homes for HB&R for the last five years. He shares his memories of his favourite home on page 46



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# Passivhaus by Kingspan






The new Kingspan Passivhaus has been designed by HTA Design LLP in collaboration with Potton.

The idea behind the design of the housetype was to defy the stereotype that Passivhaus will not work with generous openings and a form that deviates from the typical boxy design with small windows.

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UPFRONT

# DESIGN DIGEST

The latest house design ideas and news from around the world



## Life's a Beach

Defining New England-style design perfectly, this beautiful family beach house in Maine from Caleb Johnson Architects + Builders (CJAB) exudes effortless style. CJAB designed the property – located on a sandy beach – to be orientated towards the sun and with a direct view of the ocean which can be enjoyed both inside through plenty of glazing, as well as outside thanks to a wraparound veranda.

Gentle curves soften the exterior, which has been clad in pickled white oak, while the interior palette is very light to remain in keeping with the beach house theme. A massive stone chimney with fireplaces on both the interior and exterior adds wow-factor to this classic home.



IMAGES: TRENT BELL



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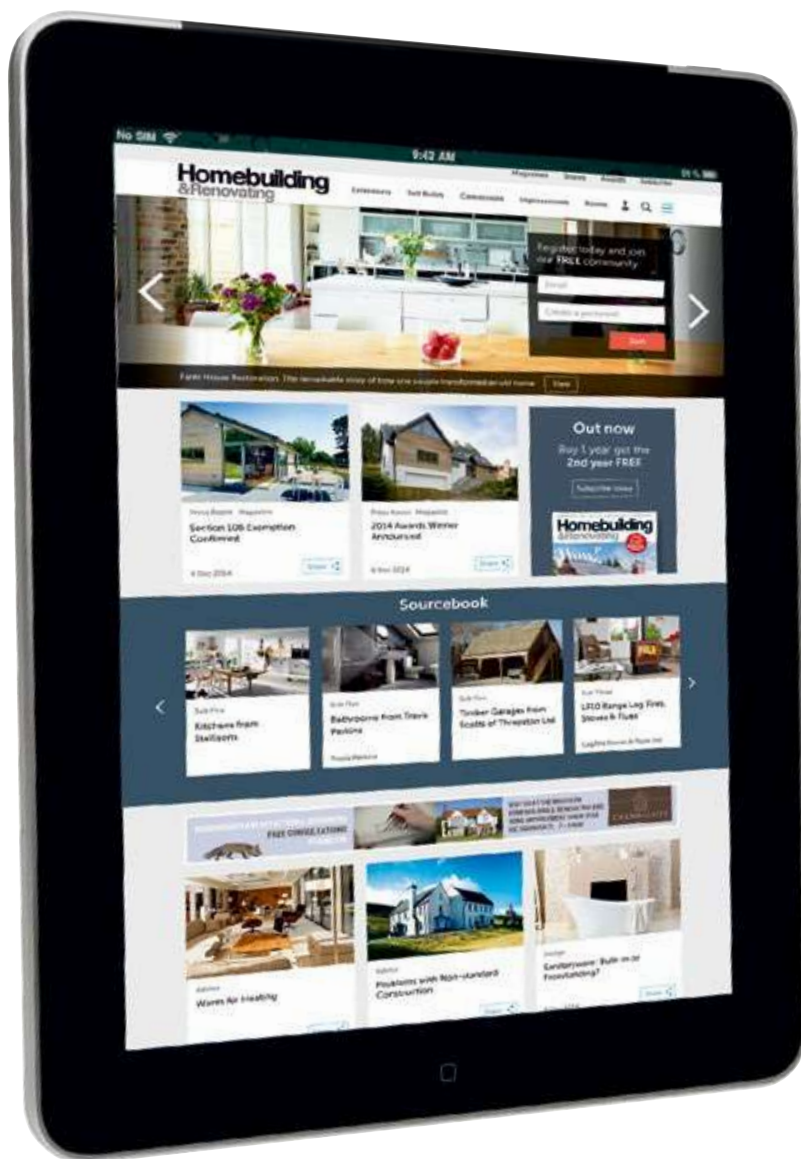
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UPFRONT

# SHARE

Your projects, views, moans and more



## “The Hempcrete is Finished Despite Delays”

We catch up with self-builder Joe Shimbart, who's building an energy-efficient oak frame house in Hampshire using natural materials



Despite delays due to the congestion at the ports in Calais, the lorries carrying the hemp for the house finally arrived on site. The timing was perfect — just as the hempcrete specialists working with my building team completed the first sections of the shuttering, the hemp and binder began to arrive on site.

It's very physical work manually casting hempcrete and you have to take care as the lime can burn the skin. Yellow hippo buckets of hempcrete were passed up and along the scaffold to those at the top of the shuttering, who were then tipping it in and gently spreading it. Care was taken not to over or under compact the hempcrete but, due to the hot weather, it was essential to get the mix into the shuttering and cast before it started to go off. There was something therapeutic about the whole process.

It was fantastic to see the house appear from the ground up as the lifts of shuttering were gradually removed. We completed all the hempcreting in just under three weeks. **For more updates on Joe's project, visit [homebuilding.co.uk/blogs](http://homebuilding.co.uk/blogs)**

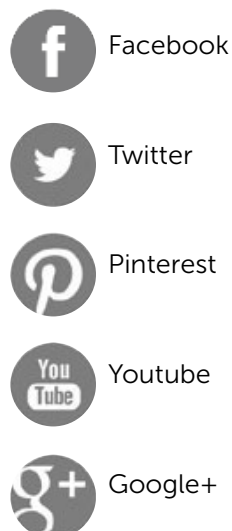
## From Facebook

**Q. Geoff and June Gaffney have created a beautiful brick-clad and oak frame home — what's your verdict on the end result?**



- A1. “A very handsome-looking house. I do love to see a mixture of wood and brick — beautiful.” **Sarah Baldwin**  
A2. “This is a fantastic project that I had the pleasure of designing down in Buckinghamshire. Great site, great clients and great end result.” **PJT Design Limited**  
A3. “Impressed with your courage, determination and success. Enjoy your achievement.” **Jill Johns**

## Be Social



## Top Tweets

“In Spain, entire villages are for sale for the price of just one UK house — could be good for a self refurb group eh?” **@senorelbaldi**

“Solve the housing crisis with self-build cities not slums”  
**@HolmesMike**

“Let your council know that you want to be part of a #selfbuild scheme by signing the Self Build Register”  
**@Lindsey\_E\_Davis**





Glossy white, GWH



Designers: Harrit &amp; Sørensen

## SCAN 66 WHITE

## PURE WHITE

White is known as the colour of purity and natural beauty. By choosing white for your wood stove, you can combine it with almost any other colour in your interior. White creates a peaceful and relaxing atmosphere.

The organic shape creates a beautiful frame around the fire and the view to the flames is maximised through the use of a glass log retainer. Hang it on the wall or choose between three different leg options, where one has multiple choices for colour inlays.

The series is also available in black paint.



Scan 66-2



Scan 66-3



Scan 66-4



Scan 66-1



## UPFRONT

# MATERIALS

Latest looks for finishes and fittings



### The Waldorf Bathroom Collection from Crosswater

The first complete bathroom collection from Crosswater, the Waldorf exudes '20s style. Here, the high-level cistern with chain costs £380, the 1,500mm double wash basin with three tap holes are £1,295 each, with the basin console in chrome costing £1,500.



### Transitions Blinds from QMotion UK

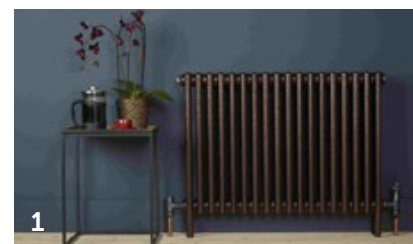
The new Transitions range of blinds from QMotion UK, complete with cordless design, cleverly filters light at the touch of a button via remote control, smartphone or tablet. With two adjustable panels, the blinds overlap to shift between privacy mode and sheer view, with the sheer fabric helping to reduce visibility from outside as well as draughts. Prices start from £748.71 incl fabric for a blind measuring 900(w)x1,500mm(l).



### The Calypso Aurora Door from JB Kind

The Calypso Aurora glazed door from JB Kind is a modern interpretation of a retro style. It is white primed and ready for a top coat finish — so you can choose any colour to suit your room. It costs £157 excl VAT (supplier dependent).

## The Latest Radiators



1. Zehnder's Copper Black Charleston radiator comes in a range of sizes, starting from £222
2. Iconic's contemporary Badge BDO steel towel rail radiator costs £1,231
3. The Intenso Horizontal from The Radiator Company costs £1,123



### Just Silence Outdoor Spa from Villeroy & Boch

Bringing the spa from your bathroom to your patio, the new Just Silence Outdoor Spa from Villeroy & Boch features JetPak™ II technology, LED lights for ambient lighting and even WiFi connectivity for iPhone and a stereo system. The spa is finished with Light Grey outer panels and an Alpine White interior. It costs from £13,200.



### DRU Maestro Fire

Thanks to balanced flue technology, DRU's Maestro 80 Triple fire doesn't have to conform to a standard location, meaning that its three-sided design provides panoramic views of the fire and more options in terms of room location. The heat output provided is between 2.2kW and 9.6kW, so the fire can be set according to the time of year, and the fire has an impressive energy-efficiency rating of 84 per cent. The fire can even be controlled on your smartphone via a free app. POA.

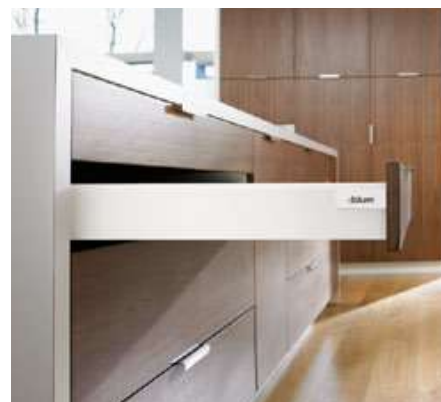
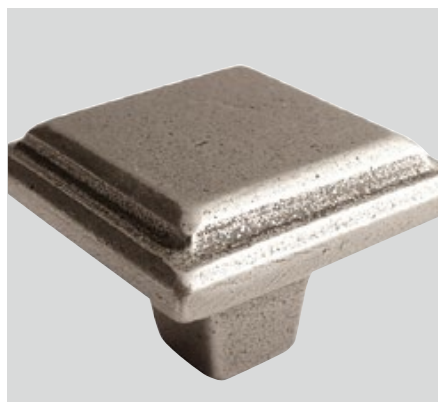


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# THE LATEST

Events, news, tips and ephemera

## New Solar Panel Installations Will Receive Little, If Any, Tariff Support

In a summer of major policy announcements, with the plug pulled on the Government's Green Deal as well as VAT increases on energy-saving materials, the latest announcement from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) of the proposed cuts to the Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs) scheme comes as a further blow to the UK's solar industry.

In the long-awaited review, issued on 27 August 2015, the DECC unveiled their plans to cut solar incentives. Under the new plans, the smallest solar arrays with less than 4kW capacity would see generation tariffs cut by 87 per cent from as early as next January. New bandings are also being proposed for different arrays — despite solar being the most popular renewable energy source among homeowners.

While wind and hydro power fared better in the consultation, with reports showing this area already passing 2012 projections, cuts of around a third to a half are still being proposed for small-scale wind and hydro power projects.

Furthermore, it has also been proposed that tariffs will be subject to cuts each quarter, which would see FiTs incentives end for new installations by January 2019. Along with these cuts, the DECC have stated that under the new proposals the reduced tariffs will also be subject to spending



ISTOCK

caps — which in themselves could be subject to change, or even elimination altogether. The consultation states that there will be: "A cap on new FiTs expenditure of between £75-£100million by 2018/19. It is important to note that if tariffs change either as a result of this consultation or future tariff reviews, including that on anaerobic digestion (AD) tariffs, then the caps will need to be adjusted accordingly. If cost-control measures are not implemented or effective in ensuring that expenditure under the scheme is affordable and sustainable, Government proposes that the only alternative would be to end generation tariffs for new applicants as soon as legislatively possible."

## Join Potton's Self Build Academy on Tour at the Eden Project

The perfect day out for budding self-builders, package supplier Potton are taking their popular Self Build Academy on tour on Saturday 17 October for a unique one-day event at the Eden Project in Cornwall.

With a packed itinerary in place, you will receive an introduction to self-build with a guide on finding land and appraising a plot, gaining top tips on everything from managing risks to dealing with services. A crash-course in designing your own home and gaining planning permission, along with an introduction to energy efficiency and how to increase the performance of your new home, will also be included. While the afternoon will bring opportunity for Q&As with Potton's self-build experts.

The course runs from 9.30am till 3pm and ticket prices cost £40 (or £60 per couple) and include free entry into the Eden Project after the course finishes, complimentary refreshments and a buffet lunch, and a number of other free gifts, including a self-build information pack and tickets to upcoming self-build shows.

For more information and to book your place, visit [selfbuildacademy.co.uk/news/eden-project-event](http://selfbuildacademy.co.uk/news/eden-project-event)


## Boris Johnson Gives Green Light for London Custom Build Scheme

Those wishing to build their own home in the Capital are one step closer to achieving their dream following the launch of the new Build Your Own London Home Register commissioned by Mayor Boris Johnson.

The new register will act as an online resource, allowing those wishing to express their interest in custom building a home in London the chance to sign up and list their preferred borough — giving City Hall an initial database to help map the level of demand.

By the end of the year, providing enough people have registered, the Mayor hopes to use this database to pair those interested in custom build with councils that have brownfield sites available, as well as developers who can help make their homebuilding dreams a reality.

Schemes such as Custom House, the Capital's first custom build project by Make Architects, are already underway with planning permission granted for nine new homes and it is anticipated there will be many more to follow if the response from the register is high.

For more information and to register your interest, visit [london.gov.uk/buildyourownhome](http://london.gov.uk/buildyourownhome) 





**FIRST ISSUE: (LATE) SUMMER 1990**  
Formed as *Individual Homes*, the magazine introduced the concept of self-build



**DECEMBER 1994**  
An introduction to 'Computer-Aided Home Design' and a horse on top of a house



**FEBRUARY 1995**  
A dramatic open plan hallway, monster flowers and a rare pale green colour scheme



**JULY 1995**  
A new look, and an interior showing how design styles have changed so quickly since the nineties

# Happy Birthday To Us!

***Homebuilding & Renovating* celebrates its 25th anniversary this month. Indulge us for a few minutes: here's our story**

This special issue marks 25 years of *Homebuilding & Renovating*. Elsewhere in this issue we're running a series of features looking back and, perhaps more interestingly, looking forward to what our projects will look like in the coming years. But we also wanted to let you know our story and what it's like to produce this unique magazine every month. On these pages we asked the three people who have produced *Homebuilding & Renovating* over this time for their story.

What is even more remarkable is the feedback that we get from you, our readers, as to how we have helped you and your projects succeed — we've reproduced some of the best ones here, too. *Homebuilding & Renovating* has a uniquely personal relationship with its readers, many of whom we meet at our events, and many of whom we meet after being asked for advice and form friendships with. Without you, of course, we wouldn't exist, so we constantly strive to produce news, analysis, ideas, insight and, of course, answers to the questions that you have about creating your dream home.

*Homebuilding & Renovating* has another unique element — we are produced by enthusiasts for enthusiasts. All three editors are experienced homebuilders and many on the team are too — and we bring our experiences, good and bad, to the page. The questions, travails and highlights we live through directly influence our editorial decisions which means you can rely on what you read because it comes from experience. As our voyage of discovery continues, then we pass on our findings and thoughts to you. Sometimes we fall on our face, but overwhelmingly we get it right and give you the honest, independent, expert answers and ideas you demand. Thank you for sharing our journey, and we look forward to the years to come.

## BLUSH, BLUSH...

*Over the years you've been more than kind...*

*"A huge thank you for the content within Homebuilding & Renovating magazine. I'm about to undertake my first self-build in Angus, Scotland, and the information I have gathered from you guys is outstanding. No other organisation/mag can touch you.*  
**TOP MARKS"**

*"My £35 yearly subscription saved me £9,000!"*

*"As an avid reader of the magazine I saved hundreds of pounds. The best magazine ever bought!"*

*"I love this magazine. We are hopefully about to embark on our first self-build project and it's been an amazing source of information."*





JANUARY 1996

A rare evening shot graces the cover — one of the first Huf Hauses in the UK



MARCH 1997

One of the all-time classic 'Can't Believe It's New' covers features a brand new Arts & Crafts home



OCTOBER 1997

First issue with the new title...

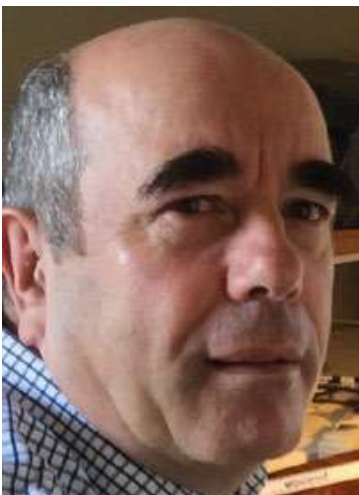


JANUARY 1998

An early discussion about open plan

## THE EARLY DAYS

*Founding Editor Peter Harris looks back on how it all began*



**Peter Harris**  
Founding Editor

I was the launch editor of a building trade magazine called **ABC&D**. This had enjoyed an amazing burst of growth in the boom years of the late 1980s and our tiny editorial team was being encouraged to 'think big thoughts' and come up with new concepts. I had a meeting for a piece for **ABC&D** with the then architecture correspondent for *The Times*, Charles Knevitt. We had breakfast at The Wolseley and chatted about all manner of building industry-related things. Did I know, asked Charles, who the single biggest housebuilder was? Expertly covering my wafer-thin knowledge I ventured the names of a couple of the larger firms. No, said he, it's self-build — if you total the number of self-builds it's bigger than the output of Britain's biggest developer.

A surprising fact. I like to think I checked this out but I'm not sure I actually did. What I definitely did do was talk to a few of our advertisers and solicit their views. Yes, came the message loud and clear, we would like to promote it but currently we can't.

Six months on and the project went live. Derek Rogers was hired to lead the amazingly successful commercial assault on the advertiser community. I produced a dummy with some gorgeous copy and imagery. We pitched the idea to a chap called John Chapman who at that time decided whether a magazine idea would get newsstand distribution or not ('not' being way more likely) and then had a highly lubricated lunch with him at his favourite Hatton Garden watering hole, the Bleeding Heart, together with our then boss, the legendary luncher Colin Urquhart. A huge one-off issue was published in 1990 and sold 30,000 copies. We were on our way.

This was the start of the journey and it stands out to me just how few of the people, organisations or products we dealt with at that time are still around today — truly an era of constant change and evolution. The magazine has grown into a multi-platform brand with exhibitions and websites adding to the overall offering. Nick Noble joined shortly after to run and develop our exhibitions.

The enthusiasm, degree of engagement and commitment of all the editors



and their teams as well as the sales and marketing folks over the 25 years has been a big factor in the magazine's success. Myself, Michael Holmes and Jason Orme have all built our own homes and have developed the first-hand knowledge of the subject that can make a specialist publication come alive and become really useful.

I stood down as editor in the mid 1990s to concentrate on developing the overall business, to be followed by Michael Holmes and then Jason Orme. All three of us stayed in the business and kept the torch burning brightly until my retirement in April this year. I do hope *Homebuilding & Renovating* has been and continues to be of use to you. Thank you all so much for your support over the years.





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THE INTELLIGENT OAK FRAME







MAY 1999

*Grand Designs* first aired on our TV screens this month. Modern homes became more palatable



JANUARY 2000

One of our first Awards issues, profiling the best homes from 1999, including a new barn-style home



APRIL 2001

Modern extensions to old homes is a classic editorial theme, and this early example sold well



MAY 2002

Editor Michael Holmes' own project made a fabulous cover story

## SELF-BUILD COMES OF AGE

*Michael Holmes remembers the 1994-2004 era, when self-build (and the magazine) began to really hit the mainstream*



**Michael Holmes**  
Editor 1994-2004  
(now Content Director)

When the first issue of *Homebuilding & Renovating* (first titled *Individual Homes*) landed at my then office at *Build It* magazine it shook the building with a glossy, perfect-bound, threatening thud. *Build It* was only a few issues old and doing quite well, but suddenly it had to share the emerging self-build market with a very well put together, heavyweight rival.

Back then, building your own home was regarded as a rather obscure thing to want to do. In reality, it was already

a market worth hundreds of millions a year, but few people had spotted this, or recognised its potential to grow and deliver more new homes than any of the nation's big name housebuilders.

It took the introduction of self-build magazines, exhibitions, media campaigns (I was then working on the PR for the first ever National Self Build Homes Show) and the creation of a new audience to coalesce the disparate players in the market and to give an identity to what would become 'the self-build industry'.

My involvement with *Homebuilding & Renovating* came when then Editor, Peter Harris, invited me to contribute a finance column in March 1992. From there I was quickly co-opted into a tiny team working full time as Deputy Editor and in January 1994, I was made Editor and the title soon went monthly. And so started a 10 year servitude which was to see the transition from *Individual Homes* to *Homebuilding & Renovating* in 1997, the launch of [homebuilding.co.uk](http://homebuilding.co.uk) and the growth of a sector that for much of 1996-2008 was contributing 16-17,000 new homes a year — a remarkable one in three new detached homes.



Above: Funny fashion era, the early 1990s...

I'd like to think that it was my natural talent as an editor and my innate understanding of the self-build audience — having self-build twice myself — that led HB&R to grow from strength to strength and become the UK's best-selling self-build magazine. Of course, the reality is that I was lucky enough to be at the helm at a time when magazine sales generally were at their peak, the housing market was booming and *Grand Designs* hit our TV screens, helping seed the self-build dream in millions.

In fact, property TV programs became so popular that I too ended up on the box presenting multiple property show formats for C5, BBC1 and ITV1, and it was this extension of my career for which I stepped aside, and handed the editorship over to Jason Orme who last year eclipsed my decade in the role to become the magazine's longest serving editor.







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DECEMBER 2004

A brand new cottage built to a tiny budget featured as our cover story as the housing market boomed



SEPTEMBER 2005

A classic new oak frame home, again built to a modest budget, made a dynamic cover



JULY 2010

Swimming pools and the now universal bi-fold doors provided our most summery of covers



DECEMBER 2012

Oak frames are a constantly popular inclusion in the magazine — this modern, fresh look worked well

## THE RECESSION YEARS



Jason Orme  
Editor (2004-current)

I got into it by accident, really, but it became a lifestyle as much as a job. I met and then worked with Michael for five years as the magazine grew and grew and, as a young kid out of university more interested in rock music than ventilation (unimaginable I know!) I never thought I would still be here 16 years later. But I quickly became interested in this self-build thing and I became editor, got married and bought a building plot all in the same year back in 2004.

The magazine enjoyed several boom years after I took over but, a year after completing my house Northern Rock 'happened', a full-on recession started and, to cap it all, the changing media industry threatened to, as those annoying marketers call it, 'disrupt' the model of magazines altogether.

What we have achieved in those years since has been nothing short of remarkable. We developed one of Britain's most-

visited homes websites (most months over half a million people enjoy [homebuilding.co.uk](http://homebuilding.co.uk)) and by providing added depth and insight to our magazine readership have carved out a dedicated audience of print readers. Unlike almost every other magazine we are actually increasing our readership and the fact that now the majority of our audience are actually annual subscribers is a huge honour.

Other particularly pleasing elements of our last 10 years have been a growing respect among what we loosely call 'trade' readers. Leading architects have told me that they not only encourage their clients to read *Homebuilding & Renovating* but actually make their staff read it in order to learn more about the latest in house-building and design trends. Plumbing associations have called us and asked for reprints of articles on emerging renewables. That we successfully manage to appeal to both novice Joe Public and experienced architects and industry experts is unique and very pleasing.

Bang in the middle of a large renovation and extension project, I'm reminded again that the success of *Homebuilding & Renovating* is our ability to talk to you, our readers, in an honest way and that you recognise us as people experiencing the same ups and downs as you. That we can write so successfully about self-build and renovation is not so much that we know the answers but rather we know the right questions to ask. You never stop learning about building houses, and that's what makes us such an interesting and, hopefully, useful read. I'd like to thank all of our readers over the years and can assure you that we'll continue to push forward in providing a unique and essential companion to the process of creating your dream home. **H**





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<b>69% LESS HEAT LOSS<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>13% LESS HEAT LOSS<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>13% LESS HEAT LOSS<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>30% MORE HEAT LOSS<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>34% MORE HEAT LOSS<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>47% MORE HEAT LOSS<sup>2</sup></b>

Notes:  
1 Heat loss for each insulator is based on the best quoted lambda value compared to rigid polycarbonate insulation with a typical lambda value of 0.023 W/m.K.  
2 Kingspan IPN core used in metal faced insulated panels.  
3 The thermal conductivity range is based on data from insulation manufacturers websites or Agreement certificates.  
4 Thermal conductivity (lambda) W/m.K values quoted at 10°C.



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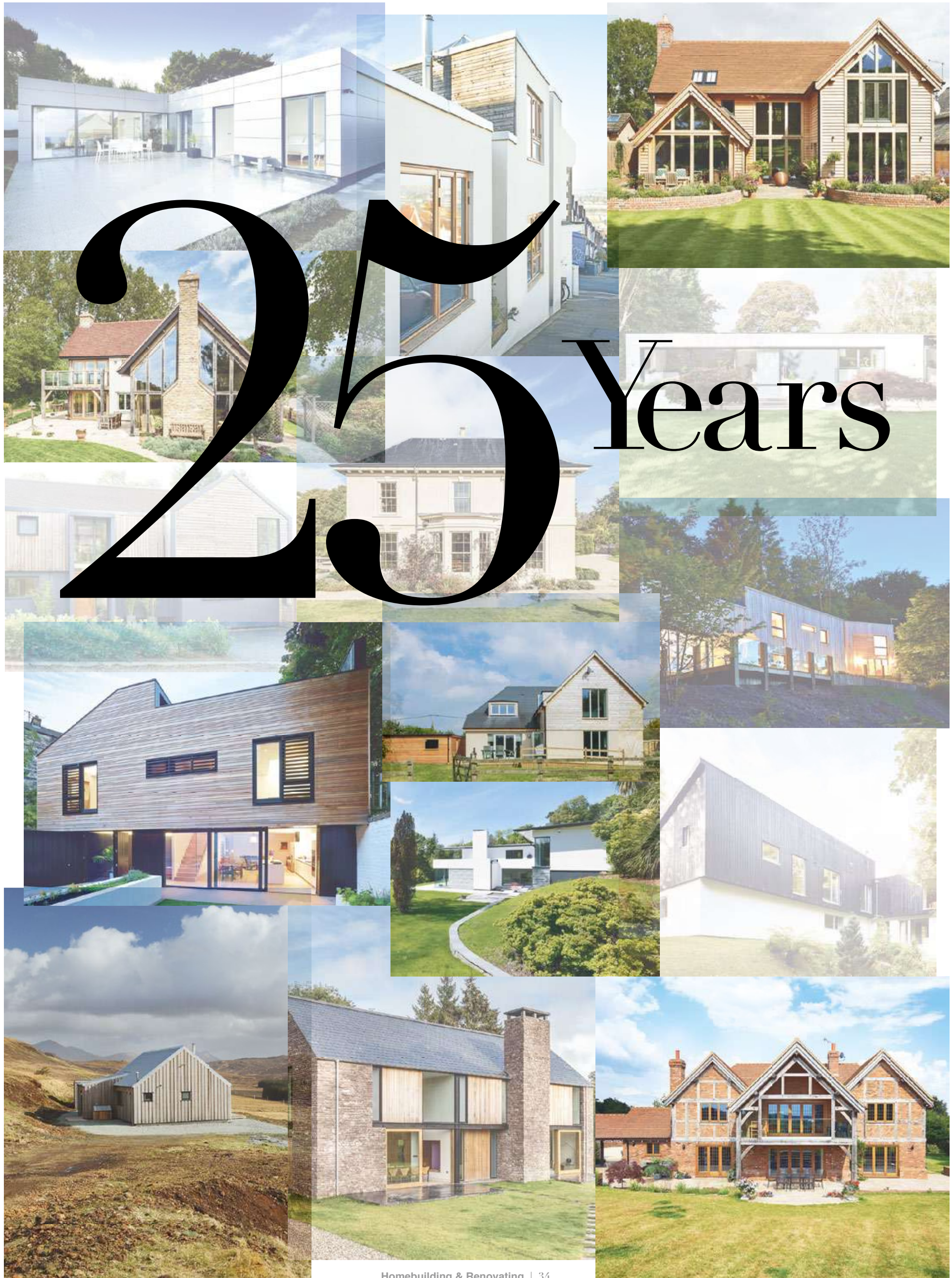
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## 25 LOOKING BACK

# of Self-build

**MARK BRINKLEY**

Mark is the author of *The Housebuilder's Bible* and an experienced builder; he's just bought another plot

For those of us who have been writing about self-build for much of this period, 25 years seems like no time at all. But in reality it's long enough to tease out some historical perspective and to begin to understand the trends that drive and define the era we live in.

In 1990, the building trade was flat on its back after the sudden and dramatic downturn in the housing market known as the 'Lawson Bust'. Chancellor Nigel Lawson's budget in 1988 had managed to add 25% to house prices overnight, only to see them slide by 35% four months later when his mortgage tax break was removed. House prices stayed depressed for several years and many people were thrown into negative equity — a phrase that is now all but forgotten.

Though self-build is relatively immune to the ups and downs of the British property market, negative equity destroyed many group self-build schemes which were a feature of the 1970s and '80s. In such schemes, self-builders had been combining forces to build their homes, sharing their own labour to save on costs. But when the groups calculated that they were losing money every hour they worked, the impetus to get ahead vanished and some schemes were abandoned half-built. Group self-build was never a big component of the self-build scene, but after 1990 it had all but vanished.

Today all the talk is of custom build which, it is hoped, may hold the key to doubling the number of self-build projects soon, but custom build is a far cry from group self-build. It involves

using an enabler to set up the sites and provide a homebuilding service. While custom build is common in other countries, it's something of a new concept in the UK.

Back in 1990 self-build was a well-established route for young people to get on the housing ladder. It was nothing new. Small local builders and a good smattering of self-build had been the backbone of British homebuilding for centuries. It was only in the 1950s and '60s that the market began to move towards the big professional developers. In 1990 there was a thriving self-build community — though those taking on a project of this nature probably wouldn't have used the term 'self-builder' to describe themselves. Pottton had been acting as a trailblazer, building showhomes at the Ideal Home exhibitions, and many other businesses catered for the self-build market. What self-build didn't have before 1990 was any sort of media profile — other than Murray Armor's bestselling book *How To Build Your Own Home*. The start of a magazine for self-builders was, in retrospect, a turning point for the self-build scene as we now know it. ➤➤

MY  
25  
YEARS

**DAVID SNELL**

"The process of building your own home has become easier in some ways and much more difficult in others. There is now a lot of support, a lot more companies offering products and services specifically to self-builders than there was in 1990. However, there has been a massive rise in bureaucracy which has made self-building, all things considered, more difficult to achieve. It's no coincidence that the total market hasn't grown massively in this time."



# Whatever Happened to...?

In the past 25 years we managed to kill off...

## COLOURED BATHROOM SUITES

Their heyday was in the 1960s and '70s but they were still being produced by the likes of Twyford in the '90s. The all-white bathroom was seen as old-fashioned and boring, and renovators were still pulling them out of existing homes and replacing them with a range of, frankly, strange colours. Back in 1994, I wrote in the first edition of *The Housebuilder's Bible* that the modern bathroom was: 'All curves and pastel colours and the taps look like mushrooms.' Much effort went into matching wall tiles and towel radiators with the bathroom suite colours. Maybe if the colours had been a little more appealing, the coloured bathroom suite might have survived. They might even make a comeback if Farrow & Ball produced the colours, but all the signs are that the white-only bathroom is here to stay.

## SPOTLIGHTS

The halogen downlight was still aspirational in the 1990s. They were everywhere in shops and restaurants but they had only just begun to infiltrate the home. Homebuilders were still mostly fitting surface-mounted spotlights and tracklighting, which gathered two or three spotlights on to a ceiling-mounted track which could, in theory, be adjusted. Uplights were still popular, as was various forms of fancy pendant lighting such as chandeliers. In truth, chandeliers are still popular, though the lamps



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**The coloured suite – avocado or peach, preferably – has died out since 1990. Other things we saw off include cork tiles**

themselves will now be LEDs — back then LEDs were only used for alarm clocks, timers and calculators. Whether a grid-like arrangement of downlights is actually an improvement on the old methods is something that is open to doubt. Making lots of holes in ceilings does nothing for energy efficiency, for sound proofing or for fire ratings.

## PINE MATCHBOARDING

Pine-clad ceilings and internal walls were a feature of the '80s house. It was thought quite normal to cover the sloping ceiling of a loft conversion with varnished matchboarding and every other bath had a hand-fitted pine surround. In stark contrast, external timber boarding was rarely seen anywhere except in certain quiet corners of the Weald and on barn conversions.

On that note, the barn conversion was really beginning to take off in 1990 and its popularity has spread to other house styles, becoming a marker for sustainable homes. Nowadays, external timber cladding, usually cedar or larch, is commonplace on housing estates up and down the land.

There are now firm signs that timber is returning to fashion

MY  
25  
YEARS



MARK STEPHENSON, POTTON

"Since the 1990s self-build has become more complex — the amount of support required by self-builders is greater due to the complexities in planning, regulation and performance standards generally. Energy efficiency has put timber frame at the forefront of self-build — back in 1990 it was really just seen as an alternative system."

● Read more 'My 25s' at [homebuilding.co.uk/25](http://homebuilding.co.uk/25)



## 25 LOOKING BACK



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Glass bricks (above) are still used today but are far from the modern home essential they were in the late 1990s. Less pleasingly, improved Building Regulations have meant that single-glazed windows, still a viable option in the 1990s, are very rare on new builds nowadays



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MY  
25  
YEARS

### BEVERLEY PEMBERTON DESIGN & MATERIALS

"Back in 1990 most self-builders would select an existing design from the library of one of the many self-build companies. Planning policies have become increasingly strict and changed so much that all my clients are now looking for a bespoke design. Open plan is virtually de rigueur these days and, for example, a separate dining room I would usually only include in larger dwellings where space is not at a premium."



once again on the inside of homes, as detailed in recent issues of *Homebuilding & Renovating*, though it tends to be much more refined and expensive than the pine matchboarding of the 1980s, which now looks comparatively cheap and dated. But the contrast in the fortunes for internal and external timber finishes shows just how fickle home trends can be.

### GLASS BRICKS

"Glass blocks should never be used again... unless you're French," says the Texan architect Bob Borson, who has devoted an entire blog to the subject, along with fine/terrible examples, on his [lifeofanarchitect.com](http://lifeofanarchitect.com) website. The 1990s were the absolute zenith of the glass brick craze; they found their way into homes across the UK as ways of magically allowing in light while maintaining privacy. They are still sold today and still occasionally find their way into modern homes, but tend to have a retro (and not in a good way) feel about them.

### EMPTY CAVITIES AND SINGLE GLAZING

In 1990, wall U values were set at  $0.6W/m^2$ , an untaxing demand which didn't require any insulation at all in the cavity, provided aircrete blockwork was used as an inner skin. Back then, anyone putting 50mm of Rockwool batts in the cavity was regarded as an eco warrior. Double glazing was still optional, though widely used. The 1990s was also the heyday of PVCu replacement windows to existing homes, though PVCu was only beginning to make inroads into the new housebuilding scene. PVCu was a trend that peaked at the turn of the Millennium; they're now being replaced with aluminium-clad timber windows.

### CORK TILES

Another stand-by of the Habitat generation was the cork floor. They were everywhere in the 1970s and '80s and they were much loved. The finish was warm and comfortable to walk on, it was waterproof and the tiles were relatively cheap and easy to lay. What's more, cork as a material ticks most of today's sustainability boxes in ways that weren't even considered back in the '80s. Cork simply went out of fashion – B&Q don't even stock cork tiles anymore – to be replaced by hardwood flooring in its various formats. Knowing the trouble that many people have with looking after their hardwood floors, I wonder whether this has been an entirely successful switch.





# 25 Years of Innovation

It feels like a lot of things we now take for granted have been born since 1990, but how many of them were around before then?

**1 STRUCTURAL INSULATED PANELS (SIPS)**  
Not known in the UK in 1990, they migrated here from North America around the Millennium.

**2 ATTIC TRUSSES**  
Now widely used to free up loft space, but were little known about in 1990.

**3 BUILT-IN VACUUM CLEANERS**  
They were arguably more common in the 1990s than they are today.

**4 CONDENSING BOILERS**  
The technology was developed and they were available but hard to find. In 1992 the Energy Savings Trust offered a £200 grant to install but it took a change in the Building Regulations in 2005 to make them near universal.

**5 ENGINEERED JOISTS**  
In their infancy back then, they came into their own at the end of the '90s.

**6 GREEN OAK FRAMING**  
This method was around but still in its infancy: Border Oak started trading in 1980.

**7 PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) PANELS**  
The first PV system was not installed in the UK until 1994.

**8 PASSIVHAUS STANDARD**  
It was developed in the '90s but didn't become widely known in the UK until recently.

**9 BOILING WATER TAPS**  
The first Quooker tap went on sale in 1992.

**10 HEATED TOWEL RAILS**  
Seen as aspirational and expensive, but not new in 1990.



FROM BOTTOM: WINGHAGER; ISTOCK; OAKWRIGHTS; TOWN & COUNTRY





## 11 MAINS PRESSURE HOT WATER SYSTEMS AND THERMAL STORES

Both were around but little known about. Unvented cylinders weren't even permitted in the UK till 1985, despite being widely available elsewhere.

## 12 RAINWATER HARVESTING AND GREY WATER RECYCLING

Interest in these technologies is new. They first started to appear at the end of the 1990s.

## 13 UNDERFLOOR HEATING

In both its warm water and electric form underfloor heating was on the market, but not much known about. Self-builders were one of the key markets back then, taking it up enthusiastically. Nu-Heat, one of the original self-build suppliers, started life in 1992.

**14 INSULATED CONCRETE FORMWORK (ICF)**  
Building systems first appeared in the 1970s but their uptake in this country has been slow. In 1990, Beco Wallform was already dealing with self-builders.

**15 PRECAST CONCRETE FLOORS**  
They first appeared in the 1970s and were well-known by 1990. Their use has continued to grow in the 25 years since.

**16 EFFICIENT GLAZING**  
Low-E glass was available but little used. Triple glazing didn't appear commercially until 2010.

**17 CORIAN AND GRANITE WORKTOPS**  
Back in 1990, most worktops were melamine, formica or occasionally timber. The trend for stone and artificial stone was still years away.

**18 SOLAR THERMAL (HOT WATER) PANELS**  
They have been widely available since the 1970s.

**19 NATURAL BUILDING MATERIALS (HEMP, LIME, STRAW, WOOD WOOL)**  
While the products themselves are age-old, the interest in using them in the home is pretty recent — not really known about at all in 1990.

**20 CODE FOR SUSTAINABLE HOMES**  
This building standard first appeared in 2007, only to be retired this year.

**21 HERITAGE PAINTS**  
Although Farrow & Ball traces its history back to the 1940s, the Heritage paint range it has become famous for didn't appear until 1992.

**22 MECHANICAL VENTILATION WITH HEAT RECOVERY (MVHR)**  
Widely available in 1990 and now very popular.

**23 GROUND-SOURCE AND AIR-SOURCE HEAT PUMPS**  
The technology was around, but mass take-up didn't happen until the mid 2000s.

**24 BIOMASS BOILERS**  
Hardly heard of in the 1990s, now, thanks to Government incentives, they are increasingly common.

**25 SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS**  
Where developers are charged a community levy in exchange for the right to build, these were introduced as part of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It would, however, be many years before they started to be applied to the planning permissions of self-builds.



# Where We Are

The self-build industry has come a long way in 25 years, but are we still far behind where we should be when it comes to building homes?

The first episode of *Grand Designs* was aired in April 1999 and in the 16 years since it has helped to publicise the concept of self-building to millions of people. At its peak, the show was reaching four to five million viewers and remains a staggering success. One would think that it has influenced a new nation of self-builders but, as the two charts to the right of this page show, the impact has been anything but.

Today there are calls to build more new homes. However, back in 1990, as a nation we built 200,000 new homes — in 2014 we managed just 140,000. The percentage of the population owning their own homes has fallen from 69% in 1990 to 62% today, a trend that is accelerating, thanks largely to the phenomenon of buy-to-let which barely existed in 1990 — buy-to-let mortgages weren't available until 1996.

While self-build now enjoys a political backing it could not have dreamed of back then, the actual number of self-builds today is actually less than it was 25 years ago, although the amount spent on each one has increased substantially. Whether self-build is easier now than then is a moot point.

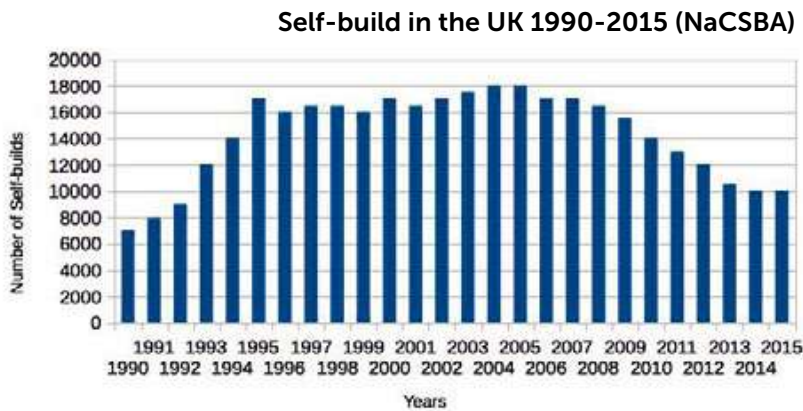
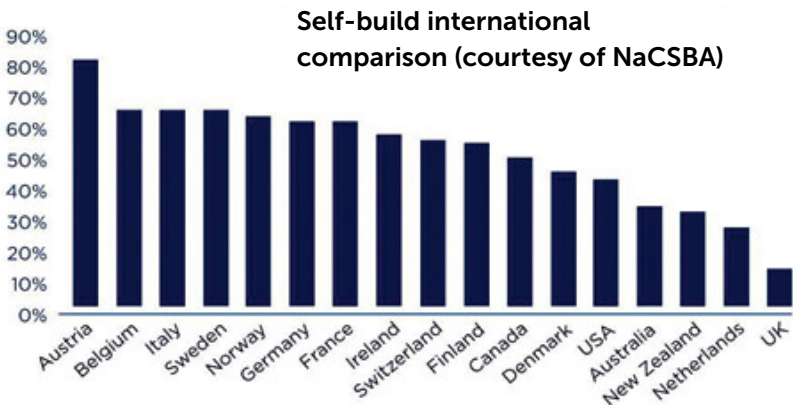
The amount earned by a bricklayer in the Midlands had peaked at around £200/1,000 bricks in 1988 but had fallen by 25% to less than £150/1,000 in 1990. Today in the south of England the rate has topped £400/1,000, which gives a clear indication of how building costs generally have increased.

Not all prices have gone up though. Plasterboard is a good example. You could buy a large sheet of plasterboard for less than £4 in 1990, identical to the 2015 price. However, the board itself is not the same. What was once sold as ordinary plasterboard is now sold at three times the price as soundproofing plasterboard. The clue is in the weight change. Back in 1990, most plasterboards weighed around 30kg per sheet: now a standard sheet weighs less than 10kg. The manufacturers have worked out how to fill the void with air so that the filling resembles a bar of Aero rather than a brick of Toblerone. This may be good news for plasterers who don't have to lift such weights, and good news for homebuilders who enjoy 1980s-style prices, but it's not good news if you want the plasterboard to deaden the transfer of sound.

A rather obtuse way to end our potted history, but somehow strangely fitting all the same. Self-building is, after all, nothing if not a numbers game. 📊



Over 15 years, *Grand Designs* has featured self-builders tackling all sorts of projects — and has engendered a growing appreciation for modern design. This project, Crossway by Hawkes Architecture, is one of its most famous



## JON GREENE, BORDER OAK

"25 years ago self-build was still a very small industry. When I started Border Oak 35 years ago there was a gap in the housing market for truly individual homes. It was quite a risk to try and create the product and the demand, and magazines such as HB&R helped enormously. I look back on many of the early Border Oak houses with a huge sense of pride — they have weathered into their settings beautifully and the designs have stood the test of time."





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# HB&R's Best Homes in 25 Years

The past 25 years have seen thousands of awe-inspiring self-build, extension and renovation projects. Here, the team behind *Homebuilding & Renovating* magazine reveal their favourites



## The Moated Manor

*Michael Holmes, Content Director*

My favourite home from my 24 years working on HB&R has to be Braylsham Castle in Sussex, as much for the remarkable story behind its creation as for the house itself. I was working at the National Homebuilding & Renovating Show back in the early 1990s when an already sexagenarian John Mew approached me with a postcard depicting a watercolour of a fairytale Medieval castle, set on a moated island complete with drawbridge, which he then proclaimed he was going to build. I am ashamed to admit that I dismissed him as a fantasist – we get our share – and told him to come back and see me when it was built, fully expecting never to see or hear from him again.

When several years later John reappeared on the stand clutching a photograph of the completed masterpiece, identical to the postcard in almost every detail, I was awestruck at what he had created.

I was lucky enough to visit John and Jo's self-build in person when they entered the Daily Telegraph HB&R Awards in 2001. Their home, designed with the help of architect Stephen Langer and built on a largely DIY basis with help of friends and family, won the Best Traditional Home category.

The project is a triumphant manifestation of the spirit of self-build — an Englishman creating his own castle, after a prolonged battle with the planners. That watercolour impression, it turned out, had been commissioned by John and issued to each member of the local planning committee to try and persuade them to support his dream. They were so impressed by it, and by John's passion to build it, that they voted to approve his home despite the officers' recommendation for refusal.

I'd like to think that the integral rear double garage at the back of the castle was John's little private joke: the only nod to the modern world in an otherwise convincing recreation of a medieval fortified manor house.



## The Highland Home

Daisy Jeffery, Features Editor

I first came across Alan and Linda's house when I was tasked with laying out the case study. The first thing I remember thinking was 'wow!' In this line of work you see so many houses come in, all of which are beautiful and individual — suited to their owners to within the finest of details. Never though has a house left me so stunned as this contemporary gem created by visionary architect Alastair MacIntrye of Scotland-based practice McInnes Gardner. So inspiring is this masterpiece it even made it into the *World's Most Amazing Homes* supplement which ran with our September 2015 issue.

As far as I'm concerned, what Alastair has created is the epitome of contemporary design done well — and to think this home started life as a pretty boring red-brick bungalow (albeit on a spectacular loch-facing plot). It's no wonder Alan and Linda are now proud of their home. The white render lends to that modern style that we are so familiar with, but the slate-effect cladding adds texture and gives, what would have been a plain exterior, warmth and definition. The jewel in the crown though is the gravity-defying glazed viewing pod that cantilevers out over the rear elevation, allowing for views out towards the loch and mountains beyond. It really is a home that captures the imagination and leaves you truly breathless, if not slightly (or very) jealous of Alan and Linda who have the pleasure of being able to call this architectural triumph home.



## Country Living

Natasha Brinsmead, Associate Editor

So often we see projects which have been unsympathetically renovated, however this has to be one of my favourites — a shining example of how to do a renovation well.

The owners were adamant from the start that they would not use anything in the main construction of the property that wouldn't have been available to the original builders in the 16th century, learning skills required along the way where necessary.

The main house has been renovated, while a two storey extension — virtually indistinguishable from the original part of the building — was added. With its picture-perfect setting, light-filled interiors and abundance of weathered materials, this is a home that in every way displays the skills, determination and commitment of its owners. The finished house radiates a sense of peacefulness and calm, fits perfectly into its surroundings, and brings a little bit of history back to life.



## The Contemporary Barn

*Simon Maxwell, photographer*

I was on the M4 at stupid o'clock and the rain came down. I was due to shoot one of the shortlisted Daily Telegraph Homebuilding & Renovating Awards homes 120 miles away in two and half hours' time and it wasn't looking good. Given that I had eight homes to shoot in just over three weeks this wasn't the best thing for the blood pressure.

I needn't have worried — the clouds above Martin Hall and Kelly Bednarczyk's architectural gem, The Nook, politely parted to enable me to get the exterior shots I was after and then the rain returned while I was shooting the interiors. By the time Martin and Kelly's children had come back from school I was treated to some great afternoon light for the family portrait we normally like to produce, and it seemed a crime not to stay on to capture a twilight exterior as well.

Working my way around the building in the morning with Martin was a fascinating process. I always like to talk to the owners if possible before the shoot (a process we often record on video) as the elements they like to focus on or explain can often dictate how I approach things. Every shoot I undertake for HB&R is different, which is partly why I love what I do. But The Nook really did create a lasting impression on me.

For me, Martin and Kelly have achieved a rare fusion, a striking and architecturally valid project which also impresses as a warm and inviting home: two characteristics which do not always appear in the same description! The barn-like structure makes use of strong, almost ruggedly traditional materials, while the use of modern construction techniques has enabled huge windows to be installed, so that whatever the weather you feel intimately connected at all times with the very special 'nook' in the Welsh countryside in which the house is located. Bright, open living spaces which are distinct but nonetheless connected, feel expansive and generously proportioned while at the same time homely and cheerfully colourful.

Award-winning design and real life under the same roof? Yes, it can be done! When I shoot for the Awards I feel that I should maintain a certain impartiality (although I of course don't get to vote), but back on the M4 that night I really did think: "Well if I win the lottery, I wonder whether Martin and Kelly might be open to offers!"







## 25 FAVOURITE HOMES

### Life on the Farm

Claire Lloyd, Deputy Editor

From a home built almost entirely by its owner for £95,000, to a squat-looking Georgian brick build transformed into an oak frame Tudor-style manor, the projects I've had the pleasure of viewing have been testament to the 'broad church' embraced by *Homebuilding & Renovating*.

Sarah and Richard Hayes' home was no exception. The couple had unified a derelict farmhouse and an adjacent barn to create a home representing the best of old and new — heavily beamed rooms in the old house, combined with high vaulted spaces containing acres of glazing in the contemporary extension that stands on the footprint of the rundown barn.

I visited on a rather grey, windy day. Despite the dull weather I wasn't prepared for the valley views that opened up before me when descending into the heart of the property. Nor for how peaceful the interiors would be while the wind howled outside — I could easily picture curling up with a book and watching the changing skies through the full-height glazing.

From the ancient timber trusses that once held up the roof of the old barn, reinstated against smooth plaster in the new extension, to the circulation space specifically designed to house the couple's '75m-long collection of books', this home is filled to the brim with unique touches.





## Victorian Renovation

Daisy Jeffery, Features Editor

Driving down quiet, tree-lined streets on a sunny day in June it felt like I was out in the countryside, not a stone's throw from Leicester city centre. Yet this fortunate spot is where Nils and Lisa Feldmann found their grand Victorian home. Interviewing homeowners is an essential part of the job at *Homebuilding & Renovating*; it not only provides opportunity to see projects first-hand, but to get to hear words of wisdom from those who have undertaken the great task of building or renovating their homes, and to pick up some great design tips along the way, too.

What Nils and Lisa have achieved here is what so many strive to do but so often fail at — marrying a period building with a modern extension and contemporary features. Fortunately, Nils is a RIBA Award-winning architect and his vision for the home has resulted in a consistent and extraordinary level of detail to restore the home's period features while adding not one, but two modern flat roof extensions to the Victorian property.

I love that the home is so unassuming. From the front elevation you are met with a beautiful period property, yet the ultra-modern entrance door hints to what lies beyond. From the entrance door you are immediately met with through-views out to the rear garden thanks to the interior being completely reconfigured. The Feldmanns have purposefully created a defined line between the old and new elements however, with changes in level, the use and non-use of skirting boards — even the original front door and stained glass has been carefully restored, along with the grand sweeping staircase which had been left hidden for decades when the former owners divided the house up into flats.

To painstakingly restore a property of this size with such enthusiasm is truly commendable, and to add two striking extensions which contrast with the existing yet work so well really does make this project such a success — so much so that the home won an award from the Federation of Master Builders this year.



## An Organic Self-build

Jason Orme, Editor

Darren Bray, one of the architects at PAD Studio, the team behind this scheme, talks a lot about contextualism — the idea that an individual house should only really be perfect for its unique setting, and no other.

PAD's New Forest house, which we featured a few years ago, is the epitome of that philosophy. It took modern shapes, materials and spaces but planted them in a firmly natural setting, showing how contemporary design can really be the perfect solution even for the most sensitive of locations. It was full of little glimpses of the owners' lifestyle there — opening up that bedroom window and diving into the natural swimming pond, and enjoying fantastic views across the New Forest from the glorious open living space. Best of all it was of a scale that made it feel achievable, not showy — a sensitive, grown-up approach to 21st-century design.

PAD Studio have gone on to be one of my favourite practices and I trust Darren's judgement on design. How lucky the owners were.



## 25 FAVOURITE HOMES



### Ruin Revived

Claire Lloyd, Deputy Editor

Reviewing our favourite homes from the last 25 years of *Homebuilding & Renovating* was rather revelatory. For me, a trend quickly emerged — and that was a preference for homes that successfully combine old and new.

Perhaps it's because my current renovation project is a 200-year-old cottage which has been extended over the years. The 'old' enjoys those quintessential cottage features — an inglenook fireplace, thick-set stone walls and exposed ceiling joists (albeit, the former has been smothered in cement mortar, and latter caked in black paint a la country pub). Meanwhile, the cluster of later additions are begging to be opened up to create modern, light-filled spaces.

Alex and Seonaid Maclean-Bristol's project takes the notion of old meets new to another level. The starting point was a Georgian ruin; the house was originally built by the Maclean of Coll clan to accommodate guests. The Maclean-Bristol's new home, designed by WT Architecture, partially inhabits the old ruin, and features a new contemporary wing; the two are connected by a glazed link. The wing sits subservient to its predecessor, but draws on a similar palette of natural materials (namely stone reused from the site) and reworks them for the 21st century. Inside this highly sustainable home, glazing has been painstaking placed so as to capture the rugged vista. And the views... well, they need no explaining. ➤➤➤





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### The Modern Cottage

*Jason Orme, Editor*

Talk about modern character! What was so exciting about this house back in the early 2000s was the juxtaposition of charming old cottage and remarkable modern interior — something rarely seen back then, when so many renovators were aiming to recreate period charm.

What made it extra special was that this was a million miles away from contemporary design by rote — it was daring, exciting and, crucially, full of character and warmth. All of the people who hated contemporary design at the time loved this home, and rightly so. It has everything — and who can fail to enjoy the glazed internal courtyard (left).

A decade on it still stands up as one of the finest houses we have covered.

### Beach House Masterpiece

*Alistair Nicholls, photographer*

My favourite house is a renovation of a 1960s beach house in Shoreham by Sea. The original house had a floating butterfly roof that the owners retained. However, everything else was new — from the façade to new upside-down layout (with a first floor living room framing the wonderful sea view), to the clever spatial arrangement. I'm often inspired by interiors but this was really special — not only was the architecture striking but the furnishings, joinery and materials all worked beautifully together.

I was also lucky enough to get to know the owners and visit the house on a number of occasions. The light in the winter was sublime and I even photographed it with snow on the beach, which was a wonderful contrast to the blue skies and wild flowers in the summer. As the house had lots of interesting wood and beautiful furniture, every shot had warmth and lacked the sterility that new renovations can have. For this reason, it was an easy house to shoot. I could definitely have lived there! ➡








## The Seaside Retreat

*Nigel Rigden, photographer*

Picking a favourite house was harder than I thought it would be and I probably ended up taking it far too seriously, but at the end of the day the name Stan Bolt kept popping to the surface. I have been photographing architect Stan's projects for years and I always look forward to it because each time there is going to be something new and exciting, and a great location — plus the fact that Stan is both fun and demanding to work for.

For an all-round package it has to be Battery Hill. This house has so much going for it — crisp clean lines, big light spaces, glass floors, a real sense of the outside and inside merging into one, plus that feeling of modernism that I associate with the British seaside.

I shot the house over two days. The first day the weather closed in and so only some interiors shots got done. The next day there was hardly a cloud in the sky, and because a couple of dusk shots were needed Stan and I were there for 14 hours non-stop. It was a long, hot day but there was a lot to cover and it all got done; the shots of Stan's son diving into the pool took a few goes, but he didn't seem to mind. Stan is always keen to show how the house sits in the landscape too, so we drove round the bay to take some photographs looking across the water.

For me, this house represents how I would like to live if I were a much tidier person than I actually am and it has my favourite feature: the infinity swimming pool — you wouldn't get me out of that in a hurry. 





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LOOKING FORWARD

# Back to the Future: The Home of 2040

**So far we've stepped back in time to examine the evolving world of self-build since the '90s — but what does the future hold? Fear not, here are our predictions for how our homes will look, perform and function in the next 25 years**



**CLAIRE LLOYD**

Claire is Deputy Editor of *Homebuilding & Renovating*, and in the midst of a renovation project. She's dusted off her crystal ball for this feature

**T**his month *Homebuilding & Renovating* shares its big birthday with another iconic (albeit, better known) title — *Back to the Future* turns 30 in October. In the second film of the '80s trilogy we're presented with a vision of the future — fast forward to 2015, where flying cars and hoverboards are protagonist Marty McFly's transportation of choice.

Rewatching this (now) classic in 2015 — this time via an on-demand, online steaming service, rather than VHS — there are some 'predictions' that invite a smirk (the fashions for one) and yet others are surprisingly accurate. While front doors with fingerprint scanning and voice-activated lighting — or biometrics, as this area of smart technology is more formally known — are not mainstream, they are very much a reality in 2015. Elsewhere, other staples which dominate the world we now inhabit — the internet for instance — are strikingly absent.

In essence, when predicting how our homes may look, feel and perform in the years leading up to 2040, there will no doubt be innovations which fall by the wayside, perhaps remaining at concept stage and moving no further. There are others which are beyond our comprehension (in the same way that few could predict the influence the internet would have in the 'noughties' and beyond, back when Robert Zemeckis filmed *Back to the Future II*). Yet, there are some ideas that will come to shape how our homes are designed, built and function, and how we live — the seeds for which are being sown now.

Over the following pages we canvas predictions from experts throughout the homebuilding industry and discover what the future may hold for our homes. What is certain is that it's a subject that divides opinion — will we be living in a high-tech world surrounded by smart technology, or one where we hanker after a simpler, more sustainable life?

## 1 THE INTERNET OF THINGS

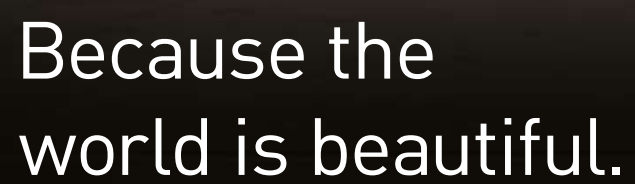
And so our glimpse into the future begins with smart home technology. "While it's hard to predict the future, with the exception of virtual reality systems [author's note: yes, you read it right — we'll come back to this topic later], most homes already have the technology, it is just not connected yet," starts Kris Hogg, CEDIA Chairman and Director of Konnectiv. "We are about to see a revolution in connected devices in the home," agrees Peter Aylett, Technical Director at Archimedia Middle East and Member of CEDIA's International Technology Council. "Technology will be all around us," adds Simon Tickle, MD of CEDIA Trade Supplier member, AWE. "Some will be visible, but much will be integrated within the items around us; the TV, the heating, the telephones, all of our items of home technology will be in some way communicating with each other, the so-called Internet of Things (IoT)."

In basic terms, the Internet of Things (IoT) enables objects to send and receive data (communicate) via the internet; to become 'smart'. "The IoT allows devices, big or small, to autonomously communicate. This will give rise to more sensors in the home allowing us to better regulate the environment and monitor everything from building security, the freshness of food, and our health," explains Peter Aylett. "If used intelligently, this technology could significantly enhance our lives without us even knowing. Depending on the occupant's preferences, habits and whereabouts, the clever systems will intuitively adjust the settings depending on the level of heating, security, entertainment or lighting required," explains Stuart Tickle.

There are a growing number of smart devices which have made their way into our self-builds in recent years. You only have to look at smart thermostats such as Nest — this product even learns the homeowners' desired temperatures for certain days and times over the week. The number of smart home devices is set to grow dramatically in the not-so-distant future. But the good news is that our existing 'dumb' appliances (those which simply do the job intended, but are unable to 'talk') may not be destined for the recycling centre. This year's IFA, Europe's biggest trade show for all things tech, saw the launch of LG's SmartThinQ Sensor — the sensor can be attached to existing appliances to make them 'smart aware'.







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## 2 THE CONNECTED KITCHEN

"Be prepared for the 'connected kitchen'," says Kris Hogg. "Major appliance manufacturers such as Samsung and LG have invested very heavily in smart devices including washing machines, fridges and ovens. Fridges are going to be able to catalogue our food, and we'll be able to connect to it whilst shopping to check if we are out of anything. While this sounds like a fantastic piece of futuristic technology, it will not come without its teething problems that must be considered in the long research and development process. For example, these fridges would need a dedicated regimen from the homeowner, and how will it know if there is only enough milk for one cup of tea?"

"While many smart systems have and are being developed to make life easier, make constant energy savings and make the home more secure, it is important to establish which technologies will enhance your life and which are simply a novelty. When loading the washing machine, walking away and turning it on from an app on your mobile phone (rather than pressing the button whilst it was in front of you), remember this: Has it made your life easier?"

Our smart home experts are smart in their assumptions — it's the technology which will truly enhance our lives (rather than 'gadgets') that will likely push on through. But who's to say that the conventional washing machine will have a place in the 2040 home anyway? Step in another innovation by LG, the LG Styler wardrobe with Clothes Care System: it's a wardrobe which uses steam technology (no need for washing powder here) to clean clothes, ridding them of odours and 99.9 per cent of germs too.

## 3 CONTROLLING OUR TECHNOLOGY

There could also be a move away from smart phones and tablets to 'wearables'. "The rise in wearable technology has been particularly noticeable within our industry and looks set to continue to grow over the coming years," predicts Petra van Meeuwen of Crestron. "The Crestron app, for instance, is

designed specifically for Apple Watch™, and brings all your home technology together, allowing you to instantly access your digital world at the tap of a button on your wrist."

Could controls be replaced by biometrics in the future? The technology is not perhaps reliable enough at present, but it's likely that products such as fingerprint entry will make their way into more homes in the future.

## 4 AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY

And what about the aforementioned virtual reality? "Both virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) will change the way we interact with our environment and the technology within it," says Peter Aylett. For those less acquainted with these two 'realities', AR blends VR enabling the user to interact with virtual content within the real world; VR on the other hand, as the name suggests, replaces the real world with an entirely virtual one.

So what does this all mean in practice? Well, AR is already with us when it comes to homes. IKEA's 2014 catalogue, for instance, featured an AR app which enabled homeowners to see how items would look and fit within their interiors before buying. The Dulux Visualizer App meanwhile allows the user to play around with different colour schemes in a real room. The coming years will likely see designed-based AR apps become more commonplace, transforming the way we buy interior and building products.

AR is having an impact on the architectural world too. The AR apps available now, and those in development, not only allow architects to show clients how their new homes will look in a much more in-depth way, but demonstrate how the wind moves around the property, what the house will look like at day and night, the sun's path, etc. in a much easier to digest format.

No doubt the software will become increasingly more sophisticated, perhaps working alongside BIM (building information modelling) to further aid architects in the design process. ➡



### RICHARD HAWKES

Architect Richard is founder of Hawkes Architecture, and the man behind one of the UK's first Passivhaus self-builds

# 25 YEARS

## 5 WILL WE INSTEAD OPT FOR A LOW-TECH LIFE?

"The world is a fast-changing place and it is sometimes easy to forget quite how quickly our culture has dramatically and profoundly changed. Many of us will have heard stories from living relatives speaking of a time before central heating. Only the main sitting room would be heated and only for some of the day — and never before November! Central heating has not been with us for very long at all, yet in this day and age it would be inconceivable to build a house which did not come equipped with central heating, insulation and double glazing.

"Add to this the impact that electricity has had and the insatiable

desire for gadgets designed to make life easier and you see the way we use and live in our homes today is profoundly different from that of our grandparents.

"So when asked what my predictions for the home of the future might be I am torn between two distinct trains of thought. If our appetite increases for gadgets

to play with in the home environment, which provide ever-increasing levels of comfort, I would anticipate a future rife with clever eco toys such as voltage optimisation and lithium-ion battery storage to provide resilience to failings in the ailing National Grid infrastructure. I would also expect houses to continue improving the 'clothes' they wear — if pre-central heated houses wore T-shirts then the best eco homes of today are adorned with the latest high-tech ski jackets.

"The other train of thought is perhaps less palatable but certainly more controversial. How about a future where we didn't use and consume as much? How about a future where we got used to having less and less and discovering an increasing level of happiness as a consequence? What if we wore jumpers indoors during winter again and only lit fires in rooms we gathered in to eat and share time as a family."

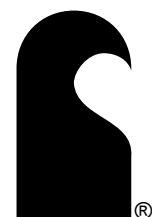




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## 25 LOOKING FORWARD

Forget the cinema room, we could all be lusting after a home VR room in the future too, according to Peter Aylett: "For home entertainment, our industry will be challenged to build VR rooms that can be shared by several users connected to the same experience. These first VR rooms will be extremely difficult to design and install, but in 25 years' time this is a vision that will very much be a reality. The next 25 years will bring more practical implementations of that 'special room' in the home where education, training, health consulting, business meetings and multi-player gaming can all take place."

## 6 'SMART' INTERIOR DESIGN

Technology could also play a role in interior design. "It is no longer unrealistic to imagine an entire wall portraying sophisticated interior decor to then switch to a beautiful lifelike view, or into a big screen for a cinema experience at the touch of a button. These technologies are being developed and they will take the industry by storm," says Stuart Tickle.

## 7 THE FABRIC-FIRST APPROACH

The fabric of our homes and our energy consumption has been subject to ever-increasing scrutiny in recent years. Renewables were perhaps, at first, hailed as a panacea; a means of driving down grid consumption by generating one's own (mostly renewable) energy. However, investing in eco 'bling' (as it's sometimes unfavourably known) is only part of the equation; most self-builders are now prioritising the fabric of their new homes. *Homebuilding & Renovating* columnist and designer Charlie Luxton describes it as thus: "A fabric-first approach is a simple concept about making low-carbon, sustainable and affordable-to-heat houses by focusing primarily on reducing heat loss — best achieved through insulation, good windows, airtightness and optimised design to passively capture as much of the sun's heat as possible.

"Given that space heating constitutes about 60 per cent of the energy consumed in the average home, getting this down means you're a long way to making a truly low-energy home. If you reduce demand, it's easier to meet it."

But, with the likes of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the requirement for all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016 — arguably key drivers behind the fabric-first approach — scrapped by the Government, what does the future hold for that all-important set of documents which serve to enforce building standards up and down the country — the Building Regulations?

"It's almost certain that Passivhaus levels of performance will become the new regulatory norm and there will no longer be a question as to whether our homes perform adequately or not," says architect Paul Testa. "This will not only mean that they are warmer and cheaper to heat, but that they're also naturally lit and well ventilated with excellent air quality."

However, BRE's Gwyn Roberts warns subsuming such standards within nationalised Building Regulations will be a challenge. "A high-rise flat in an urban area is very different to a rural self-build," he says. "What we will however see in the coming years is improvements in the accuracy of recording the performance of homes built to standards like Passivhaus."

Whatever lies in store when it comes to the Building Regulations,



## PAUL TESTA

Architect Paul is founder of Sheffield-based Paul Testa Architecture and specialises in sustainable design

## 8 PREFABRICATED TIMBER HOMES

"Fabrication technology is improving and the increasing skills gap is well documented. This will push a growth in methods of construction that allow prefabrication; building systems will become more prevalent. This will reduce standardisation, allowing self-builders to have an input in the design of their home as the supply chain distance between buyer and manufacturer will shorten, along with the time taken to deliver the end product. Customisation, as with buying a new car, will become the norm.

"As our natural resources continue to decline and consumer awareness of this issue grows, mass timber construction (cross laminated timber, Brettstapel, etc.) will also shift into the mainstream. Ideal for prefabrication, it will encourage increased forestry and the locking in of huge amounts of atmospheric carbon into the structure of our buildings. It will become a necessity that the construction of our homes actively reduces global carbon rather than adding to it.

"The general trend of rising construction costs will continue, making it more important that each building element does more than one thing. We will see the mass timber structures also being exposed as internal surfaces, leading us away from fragile plastered interiors and towards warm, robust finishes.

"We will transition through a period of smart homes before we realise that additional technology only complicates things and doesn't improve the way we live. Fabric-first approaches will dominate, delivering comfort and performance through passive systems that don't require a smart phone or a good WIFI signal to work.

"In short, my 25-year prediction is for a growth in simple, customisable, prefabricated timber homes that deliver warm, robust spaces with exceptional comfort, low running costs and the elimination of the damp and cold defects that plague many of our new builds today."

self-builders are reassuringly one step ahead of the crowd. "Most self-builders are already building houses which go above and beyond these standards; they spend considerable time designing and detailing their homes," says Gwyn Roberts.

## 9 THE ENERGY-POSITIVE HOME AND STORING ELECTRICITY

Could we perhaps be moving one step beyond? Could the fabric-first approach be combined with renewables (solar in the main) and energy storage to create homes which are 'energy positive', generating more energy than they consume?

"The German Feed-in Tariff model is interesting — the third and final phase will see a move towards grid parity," says BRE's ➤





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## 25 LOOKING FORWARD



Gwyn Roberts. In basic terms, grid parity occurs when an alternative energy source produces electricity at a cost which is equal to or lower in price than that bought in from the grid. One of the last components in this equation is electricity storage — after all, photovoltaics (PV) generate electricity when it's needed least, on warm, sunny days when you're out at work or in the garden. The good news is that the technology is already here, if in its infancy. Kris Hogg, CEDIA Chairman, explains: "Large companies are looking at 48V DC power distribution for the home, the most recent announcement of which was from Tesla who launched its Powerwall system. This is a big sleek battery that sits on the wall and uses a low voltage cabling system to deliver power into the home. These low voltage power systems will link to another home generation system, for example solar or wind, and will store the energy that is created, rather than feeding it back to the grid."

Interesting, BRE's Gwyn Roberts sees the advent of electric cars as a key driver (no pun intended). "Sooner rather than later we are likely to see electricity storage within houses, with electric cars charged at home; the two will be joined up," he says.

There are a number of pioneering new builds which are forging the way for the energy-positive home. Gwyn Roberts points to the work of architect Bill Dunster and practice ZEDfactory, who have developed ZERO Bills Homes. This affordable, solar-powered electric home concept, delivered by enabler ZERO Bills Homes Company, promises to banish energy bills and actually earn the homeowner money.

Another project of particular note is the SOLCER House, designed and built by SPECIFIC (a consortium headed up by Swansea University and industry partners). "At the heart of this project is the concept of 'Buildings as Power Stations' — fully integrated renewable energy supply, both thermal and electrical energy storage, and reduced energy demand, to create an energy-positive house," say the experts at SPECIFIC. "It shows that proven, readily available technology can be integrated and optimised to produce a home that's comfortable to live in, simple to use and earns money as well," adds CEO Kevin Bygate.

After launching the house in summer 2015, the group are now ➡



### COULD CNC FABRICATION PROVIDE A MODEL FOR LOW-COST HOUSING?

**T**his project started life as a response to other commercial and open source projects experimenting with plywood and CNC fabrication techniques," says architect Niall Maxwell of Rural Office for Architecture. "Our ambition was to develop a prototype for a self-assembly plywood studio kit, made using CNC fabrication techniques, for use by home workers and those involved in creative practice. The building should be easily assembled by two people, affordable, thermally efficient and comply with Permitted Development."

"The system is designed from plywood sheets alone creating simple modular repetitive structural panels for walls, floors and roof. It requires no additional structural support above ground, and is designed with no structural redundancy; the plywood acting as structure, building envelope and internal finish. This is the key difference between our prototype system and that of others which use a more traditional structural hierarchy."

"So think of it as the building equivalent of flat-pack furniture, but with the added benefits of future extension, alteration or relocation. The materials are chosen for their environmental credentials and the whole building has the ability to be recycled."

"We are currently developing a further prototype and exploring ways in which the system can be used to develop low-cost housing," concludes Niall Maxwell.



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## 25 LOOKING BACK

working towards introducing a thermal store. The aim is that the thermal store (which is about the size of a large chest freezer) will store solar heat in the summer to use in the winter.

"Our next move at a building level will be interconnected buildings which can share energy. Imagine that you go on holiday for a week and leave your house to generate and sell the energy while you're away. That is not too difficult to do using the Internet of Things," Kevin Bygate says.

Yet another example is Caplin Homes' Zero Carbon Solution. The house not only makes the most of passive solar gain (like the other aforementioned models), but utilises Caplin Homes' patented Earth Energy Bank — in basic terms, heat generated by PVT panels is stored within the ground when not needed, then drawn up to the house via a heat pump on colder days.

Of note is the importance the sun's energy plays in these models — both through passive solar gain and solar technology. "Solar technology will get more and more efficient," confirms Gwyn Roberts. Could the coming years bring about the decentralisation of the grid, with our future homes supporting our energy needs and more?

## 10 OFF-SITE CONSTRUCTION

Of course, key to building a home that is airtight and well insulated is accuracy and attention to detail at both the design stage and during the build; on-site construction can present a particular challenge here. "The skills gap in this area is a big issue," says Gwyn Roberts. Could increasing dependence on prefabrication — off-site, factory-controlled construction — be the solution for our self-builds in the coming years?

Some modern prefab solutions have been with us for a good number of years; SIPs (structural insulated panels) for one. But more methods are likely to be developed, with other existing systems gaining popularity. Architect Paul Testa sees timber as key to the future of prefabrication (see p.61), but masonry is also moving with the times. "Wienerberger [the world's largest brick manufacturer] do have systems which are built off-site in Europe," explains Gwyn Roberts.

There are challenges too in this market. "As soon as you build a factory you need a stable housing market; if the market dips you cannot sustain this type of construction," warns Roberts.

## 11 DIGITAL PRINTING

It goes without saying that the word 'printing' is synonymous with paper, and thus the concept of designing an item using CAD software or the like and then 'printing' it in a material such as wood or concrete, rather makes the mind boggle. But digital printing will play a big role in off-site construction.

There are two areas of digital printing which are likely to be with us for the foreseeable future: CNC machining or milling, and 3D printing. The best way to differentiate between the two is perhaps by describing CNC fabrication as a process of subtracting — it cuts a material into desired components or shapes. 3D printing sees materials added to to create the desired outcome.

One such example of the former is the prototype developed by architect Niall Maxwell of Rural Office for Architecture (see p. 63). Another is WikiHouse: an open source building system. "In tangible terms WikiHouse is a series of pre-drawn details, ➤



**DARREN BRAY**

Architect Darren is Associate Director of PAD Studio and a visiting tutor to Portsmouth School of Architecture

## 12 RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES AHEAD

"An ageing population in the UK is already beginning to have an impact on thoughts of what the future housing stock may look like. There are people out there now who have or are just about to retire creating briefs for the houses of the future. Those in their early 60s want houses that will respond to the environment and be their dream home for the next 25 to 30 years. And why not when you have ploughed your life savings into a project?

"At PAD, we are working on one such house for a client that wants their home to be a stunning piece of architecture but also a learning centre for PhD students at the University of Portsmouth. Post-occupancy evaluation is going to be critical, with intelligent technology recording and responding to the owner's daily usage of the building. The house will feedback about how they can adjust their daily life to use less.

"Meanwhile, our latest Paragraph 55 house is a model for those retiring, downsizing and making provision for potential carers (so that in later life occupants don't have to move out).

"Running parallel with this will be houses that have to place bioclimatic design at the centre of the brief. As climate challenge becomes ever-more influential throughout the world, every new house must be site specific, responding to its context and taking account of warmer, drier summers and colder, wetter winters. Parts of the world will become uninhabitable, parts will have weather patterns and temperatures that will effect how buildings are conceived and where they are placed on a site. As occupants, we will have greater control over how our buildings perform. It will need to be a relationship between owner and structure; one that creates cooperation and harmony, that confronts us as users with the realisation that we cannot continue to abuse the earth's resources. Your house will be linked to the internet, where it will give feedback to you as an owner, but maybe to the energy companies. Perhaps in the future homeowners will only get so much grid-fed energy a year!

"As designers, passive solar design is critical as a means to creating buildings that harness the power of the sun. But it's also critical to design buildings that can respond to the rising risks of flooding and also challenges with dwelling resources, budgets and land. This is something that architects must put at the top of the agenda for the next 25 years and it is something we are already doing here at PAD. We are designing contextual houses that respond to a site's solar orientation, houses that float, use less energy, less floor space (saving a client's budget). The interesting and critical aspect of all of this is that this challenge should be a wake-up call to architects, to take the reins of these creative design and real world issues. This is an opportunity for all architects to take on the lead master craftsmanship role again!





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## 25 LOOKING FORWARD



proven to work, that can be used by anyone to design their own home,” explains Homebuilding Editor Jason Orme, who recently interviewed the powerhouse and cofounder behind WikiHouse, Alastair Parvin. “The ‘building pieces’ can then be manufactured by a CNC machine and built on site by the owner. Not only does it open up the world of architecture, but it makes the scary world of building houses about as possible as a fairly complicated IKEA kit.”

In the UK, materials ranging from glass, steel and concrete have all been experimented with. Not only will the items with which we furnish our homes be produced in this way, but even our houses could be ‘printed’. In fact, in July this year Chinese construction company Zhuoda Group erected a house constructed of six 3D printed modules — in just three hours.

## 13 THE IMPACT OF THE HOME ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

One concept that is steadily gaining traction and recognition is the impact buildings have on our health and wellbeing — it’s a topic which will be increasingly important in the not-so-distant future. According to Saint-Gobain, we spend 90 per cent of our time indoors or within a vehicle. An astounding figure. “In 25 years’ time we will be spending even more time at home as technology and connectivity makes home-working, for instance, the norm rather than the exception,” adds Oliver Rehm, MD of package company Baufritz UK.

“Our fascination with healthy eating is nothing new — entire industries are based around it,” continues Rehm. “It is strange, then, that we are only just beginning to consider the impact of our home environment upon our health in the same way.”

Health and wellbeing in the home is multifaceted; it does not simply concern thermal comfort, but the presence of natural light, air quality, sound quality, access to green spaces... the list goes on. Category 7 of the ill-fated Code for Sustainable Homes, for instance, looked at daylighting, sound insulation, access to private outdoor space, and lifetime homes. (On this note, the Lifetime Homes standard, developed in 1990s, will perhaps become mainstream in addressing the challenges of an ageing pollution — the

### BACA’S AMPHIBIOUS HOME — THE SOLUTION TO FLOODING?

**F**looding is a particular challenge for many existing homes in the UK, and it’s widely speculated that the frequency and severity of flooding is set to increase in future years (thanks in part to climate change). There’s perhaps two solutions facing housebuilders and self-builders over the next 25 years — avoid building on floodplains and designated flood-risk areas (difficult to do in the densely populated south-east), and/or respond with homes equipped for dealing with flood waters.

One forward-thinking architectural practice is pioneering ahead in the latter — they’ve even written a number of books on the topic; their latest is the aptly named *Aquatecture*. The solution offered by London-based practice BACA is amphibious housing. Formosa, a one-off amphibious home designed for a site designated as Flood Zone 3b, is its flagship build at present. Finished in 2014, the self-build is designed to rise by 2.7m, protecting the house in the event of a 1 in 100 year flood. The flexible services are designed to rise by 3m too, preventing contamination from flood waters.

challenge of which architect Darren Bray discusses on p.65.)

While the Code may have been scrapped, conglomerates such as Saint-Gobain are promoting the building of healthy homes through their Multi Comfort Home standard. Meanwhile, one of the three ‘pillars’ of BRE’s new Home Quality Mark is wellbeing, with good quality air, natural light and access to amenities at its core.

Health in the home is a complex beast to unravel, however. In striving to make our homes more energy efficient and airtight, we often wrap them in layers of synthetic materials, many of which give off VOCs (volatile organic compounds) which can, in high doses, be of detriment to our health as well as aggravating allergies and respiratory conditions — the so-called Toxic Home Syndrome. Good-quality ventilation is key to combating this — so is minimising the use of materials with potential to off-gas.

“Houses should protect their occupants from factors that may adversely affect health — such as insulation, glues or solvents that can cause breathing difficulties or aggravate allergies. And so, from solvent-free paint to 100 per cent natural wood shaving insulation, we ensure that every material has been carefully specified for its quality and minimal health risk. Our insulation is the first in the world to be awarded Cradle to Cradle status — a quality mark that demonstrates care for health as well as sustainability. I hope that in 25 years’ time Cradle to Cradle will be as everyday as calorie counting, as more companies follow Baufritz’s lead in developing healthy homes and building products,” says Oliver Rehm.

It’s easy to assume that choosing natural materials over synthetic is simply the way to go. “Natural materials, once treated for fire resistance for instance, may be no better than manmade materials,” warns Gwyn Roberts. Careful, considered specification is key. **H**



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# “People Are So Brave. It’s a Minefield!”

**Ken Shuttleworth is one of Britain’s best-known architects and a self-builder, too. He talks to Jason Orme about house design and building one-off homes**

**T**he man behind, among countless others, Wembley Stadium, ‘The Gherkin’ and Hong Kong Airport, is refreshingly good company. Ken Shuttleworth is thoughtful and pleasingly grounded considering his elevated status as one of the world’s best architects. Even better for us, he’s a self-builder, and while his firm, MAKE, tends to busy itself (it has over 100 staff) on commercial and larger-scale schemes these days, he retains a huge passion for one-off homes. *Homebuilding & Renovating* featured Ken’s own home, Crescent House in Wiltshire, back in the late 1990s (he has since also built in London) and so, to mark our 25th anniversary, Ken spared us an hour to talk about building individual homes and to look back at Crescent House.

SIMON MAXWELL



**Homebuilding & Renovating:** We featured Crescent House back in 2001, a couple of years after it was built. How have things changed for you, and for those of us mad enough to build our own homes, since? What was it like building such a modern home back then?

**KEN SHUTTLEWORTH:** I still live there. At the time there were very few one-off modern homes. Hardly anyone had done anything like it and I was lucky in that we had access to mainly commercial contractors and engineers, who now work for big firms like Laing O’Rourke and Arup, to help build it; it was the dream team for any major scheme, and we had them. It was a heavy-duty project — none of us were really geared up for doing one-off houses back then. It was, and is, an unusual structure for a house. In the last 15 years a lot more houses have been built of this ilk — it’s now one of hundreds of modern homes. Yet I still have clients now who ask me to design them a home because of seeing Crescent House; designing them is amazingly time-consuming.



NIGEL YOUNG



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SIMON MAXWELL



**HB&R:** So how can people who don't have access to the expertise you had ever hope to achieve something as good?

**KS:** When I watch *Grand Designs* I'm always amazed by the bravery of some of these people. It's a minefield! People take on these projects and have no idea of what can potentially happen. And the story is always the same — it's always late and it's always over budget. On Crescent House we had a full set of drawings and a full bill of quantities. So many people on *Grand Designs* don't even have a full set of drawings.

There are a lot of people who just don't value the importance of design and try to scrimp. Crescent House could never have been done without all the hours of design work — it wouldn't have stood up!

**HB&R:** So what advice would you give to self-builders approaching you today?

**KS:** You need to be very clear what your budget is — you have to be realistic about what you can afford, then you can work out the area of the house from that. But being realistic is key. People are very optimistic about building their own house and what they can actually get. I had a budget of £345,000, which we kept to and we spent — back then that worked out at around £1,000/m<sup>2</sup>. ➤

MAKE ARCHITECTS



JULIAN ABRAMS



## CRESCENT HOUSE, FEBRUARY 2001

"I don't think building your own home is something you should do too young," says Ken Shuttleworth when *Homebuilding & Renovating* interviewed him at his newly built Crescent House for the February 2001 issue. "I think about 45 is the minimum."



Ken was just a touch shy of that age when he began the remarkable home, which consists of two crescents (one for bedroom space, the other inner crescent for open plan living around huge curtain wall glazing overlooking the garden). We described the house as "full of surprises" and it went on to become an icon of modern private house design.







## 25 KEN SHUTTLEWORTH

*Homebuilding & Renovating*  
Editor, Jason Orme, and  
Ken Shuttleworth in  
his London offices



**HB&R:** Back in the 1990s you didn't get many modern homes.

**KS:** There certainly weren't many modern homes around when Crescent House was built. But if you look nowadays at the general population that would have always wanted Georgian-style homes, that has been pushed on and the major housebuilders are building a lot of modern homes themselves. Thanks to shows like *Grand Designs* and magazines like *Homebuilding & Renovating* people are generally more aware of architecture. IKEA has had a major influence — remember that IKEA campaign, 'Chuck Out Your Chintz'? If you go round houses these days, they are actually quite modern.

**HB&R:** Are there any houses of the past 15 years which you've been really impressed with?

**KS:** To be totally honest I've been going back to some of Frank Lloyd Wright's buildings in California. There are lots of things about his work that are still motivating today. The thing with Lloyd Wright and John Lautner is that they were pushing ahead against the modern movement, countering the angular and minimalist element of modern homes; their work was much more organic. It feels like a more sympathetic form of architecture.

**HBR:** Modern house design moves on all the time and has changed even since you built Crescent House. If someone came to you and asked for a '2015' house, what would it be?

**KS:** It would be much more energy efficient. You would be looking all the time at solar gain and getting down to zero carbon — which in those days nobody was talking about. I would do a lot more of this if I was doing it now. Locally sourced materials would be key — not least because a lot of the embodied energy goes in transport. **H**

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# Home

**This section: Everything you need to create a brilliant individual home — from ideas, expert guides and designers' advice to other people's inspiring projects**



Homes:

**A New Oak Frame Home** P.78



Homes:

**A Barn-Style Package Build** P.114



Homes:

**A Contemporary Self-build** P.96

- Plus:**
- Buyer's Guide to Stone Flooring P.92
  - Living Room Design Masterclass P.109
  - Before and After Transformation P.129
  - Quick Ideas for Every Room P.131



HOMES OAK FRAME SELF-BUILD

# Woodland Retreat

Debbie and Gerard Rogers' new oak frame home, on a wooded semi-rural plot, has been meticulously designed and crafted so as to become a home for life

Words: Debbie Jeffery  
Photography: c/o Oakwrights

## PROJECT NOTES

**Project:** Oak frame self-build

**Location:** Cambridge

**Dates:** May 11 – Dec 12

**Size:** 269m<sup>2</sup>

**Land cost:** £222,750

**Build cost:** £530,000  
(£1,970/m<sup>2</sup>)

**Value:** £900,000+














The image shows a two-story house with a steep gabled roof covered in dark grey tiles. The exterior walls are clad in horizontal, untreated oak weatherboarding. A large glass extension with multiple panes is attached to the side of the house. To the left, a small window is visible. In the foreground, there is a paved patio area with a metal table and chairs. The garden is filled with various plants, including tall yellow flowers, purple flowers, and green foliage. The background shows a gravel area and more trees under a blue sky with white clouds.

### The Exterior

Oakwrights crafted and erected the oak frame for the house, which is clad externally in untreated horizontal oak weatherboarding — chosen to suit the secluded semi-rural setting (the plot was once part of an orchard). Debbie rescued plants and reinstated flower beds to recreate a pretty cottage garden





### The Exterior Details

A natural palette of materials including untreated oak weatherboarding and a slate roof combine to stunning effect. Beneath this outer shell lies Oakwrights' WrightWall and WrightRoof encapsulation system, and of course, the beautiful oak frame — the latter is a highlight of the interiors





## THE QUICK READ

➔ Debbie and Gerard Rogers were initially inspired to build when Gerard's elderly mother needed to come and live with them. They bought a double plot of land with friends and built two new houses side by side

➔ The planning process took several years, and the design of the house changed with the family's circumstances. Every room has been carefully considered and futureproofed, so that the end result is a beautiful and energy-efficient oak frame home which will be practical at all stages of life

**D**ebbie and Gerard Rogers had never previously considered building a house until they were motivated by the needs of an elderly relative. "Gerard's mother dreaded the idea of moving into a care home, so we decided to bring her to live with us," explains Debbie. "Our previous three-bed semi wasn't large enough, as we have three children, and we couldn't find anywhere suitable nearby with a ground floor bedroom and bathroom, which was why we decided to build our own home."

When a plot of land came on to the market with outline planning permission for two houses Debbie and Gerard teamed up with friends who were also keen to design their own house, and agreed to build side by side. "Fortunately we were able to carry on living in our previous home, otherwise we would have thought twice about taking on a build," says Debbie.

### A Challenging Planning Process

"We'd seen Oakwrights exhibiting at a Homebuilding and Renovating Show, and instantly loved the idea of building an oak frame house," explains Debbie. "We worked with their designer Pete Tonks and had in-depth meetings with both the planning and conservation officers. Everything was looking really positive."

Planning drawings, photo montages, street scene perspectives and the design and access statement were all submitted, but due to staff and procedural changes at the local planning authority the application was initially refused and subsequently dismissed at appeal.

"The new conservation officer didn't support our scheme so we had no choice other than to redesign," says Debbie. "So much time had passed, and during the long planning stage Gerard's mother sadly passed away, so we then needed to rethink the layout of the house as we didn't need a dedicated ground floor bedroom or a separate entrance."

➔

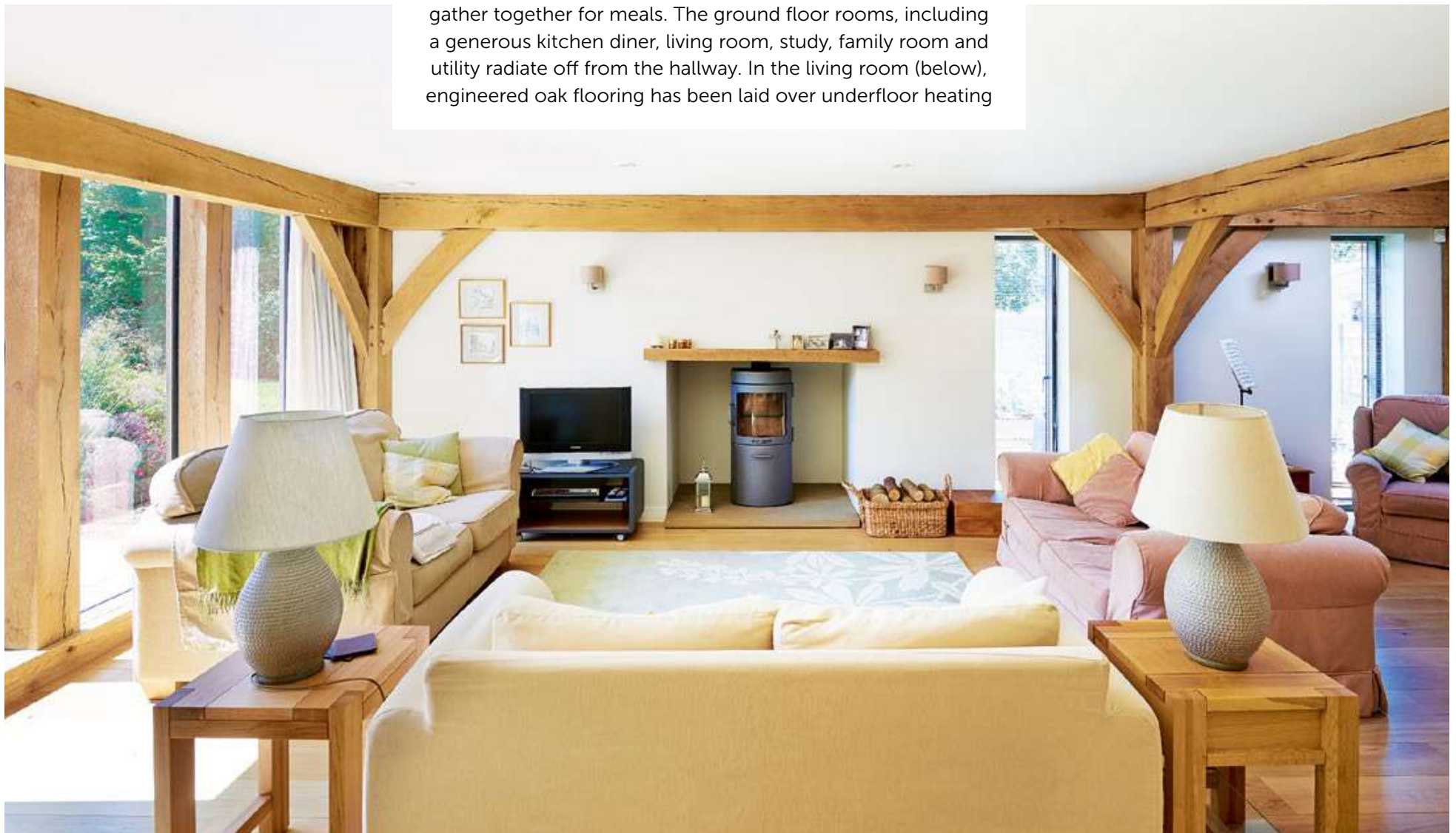






### Ground Floor Rooms

The statement helical oak and steel staircase was imported from Italy and rises up from the spacious ground floor hallway, which was specifically designed so that the family could gather together for meals. The ground floor rooms, including a generous kitchen diner, living room, study, family room and utility radiate off from the hallway. In the living room (below), engineered oak flooring has been laid over underfloor heating





## HOMES OAK FRAME SELF-BUILD



Two further revised planning applications were made, which eventually resulted in full planning approval being granted. “We both felt that our designer Pete Tonks listened carefully, and was incredibly intuitive — he instinctively knew what we were looking for,” reflects Debbie.

### A Futureproofed Home

The house is based on Oakwrights’ Woodhouse design range, and the ground floor is predominantly open plan with a spacious hallway designed for large family gatherings. Upstairs the children all have bedrooms on the first floor and share a family bathroom, while Debbie and Gerard’s spacious master suite is positioned to the other end of the galleried landing.

It was important for Debbie and Gerard that their new home should serve them well into the future, and they worked with designer Pete to ensure that the building would be suitably future-proofed, using the Lifetime Homes standard to guide them. The standard was developed in the early 1990s with accessible and inclusive design at its core; it incorporates 16 design criteria that can be applied to new homes at minimal cost, and supports the changing needs of individuals and families throughout different stages of their lives.

With an eye on future energy bills too, Debbie and Gerard installed photovoltaic (PV) panels for generating electricity, in addition to solar thermal panels for hot water, and an air-source heat pump. A new planning application was, however, needed for the solar panels, as their location had not been previously specified.

### Above and Top Right: Kitchen Dining Room

Soft grey kitchen cabinets have been combined with white Corian worktops; the kitchen was sourced from IKAS Kitchen Design Centre. The space features both an island breakfast bar providing informal dining, while there’s also a generous dining area beneath a vaulted ceiling

### Project Managing the Build

“As Gerard works away from home for much of the time we decided that I would project manage the build, together with Oakwrights and a small team of trades,” says Debbie. “For me it was all about personal recommendation and gut instinct, and I would only employ people I liked and trusted. I nicknamed three of the subcontractors my musketeers.” Unfortunately, Debbie became seriously ill part-way through the project; the family relied heavily on the ‘three musketeers’ to help keep the build on track while she was in hospital.

The garden plot sits in a village Conservation Area bordering open countryside, and required an arboriculture survey to assess trees on the site, in addition to a topographical survey dealing with the levels, drainage, boundaries and access. Clay soil and the proximity of trees on the quarter-acre plot meant that expensive piled foundations were required. Once the house’s plinth was built using handmade bricks it was time for the oak frame to be erected by Oakwrights’ team over a four-day period.

“The house was already so familiar to us in 2D form after four years of planning, discussing and redesigning, that there was a





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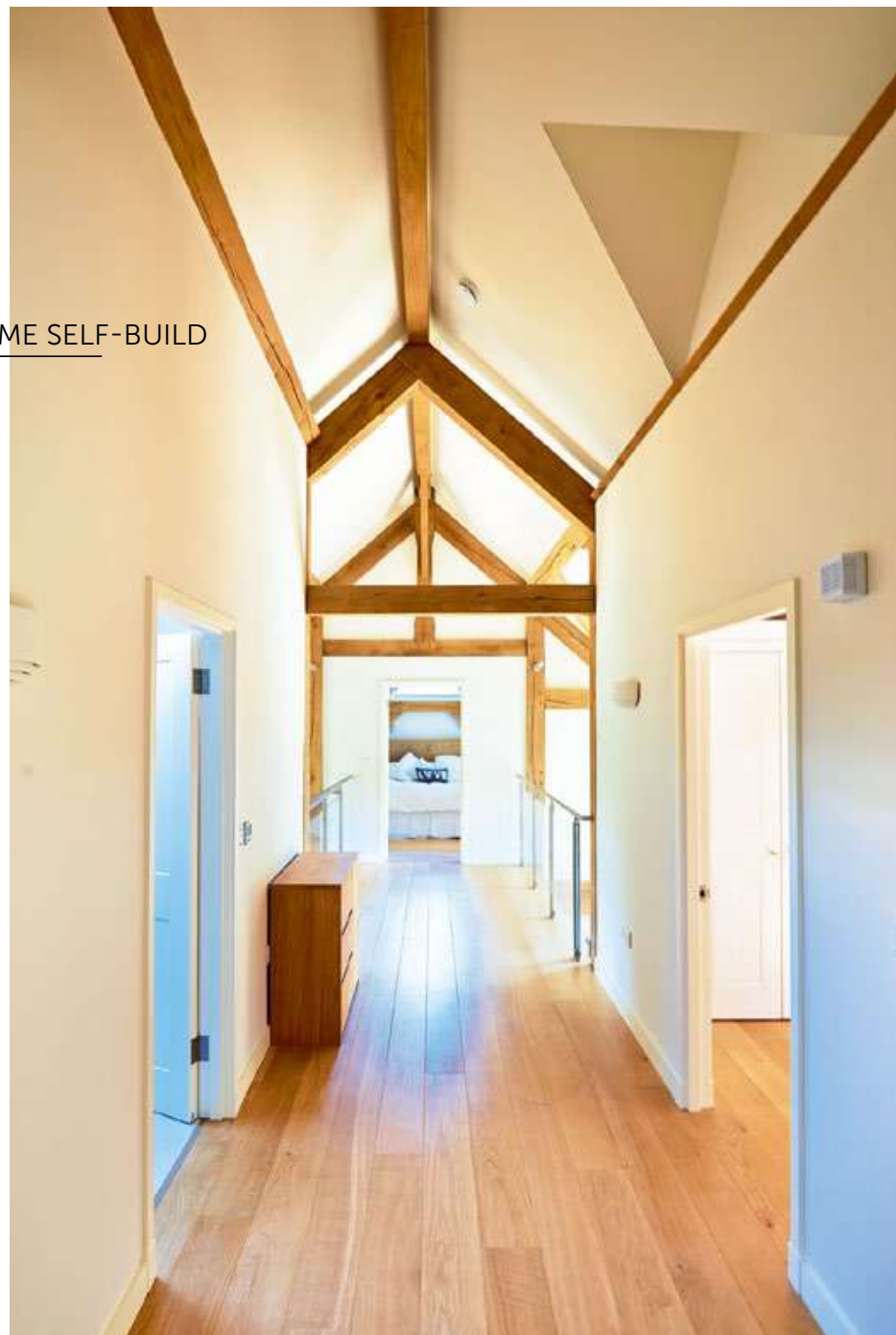
\*In a database of independent Danish tests of heat pumps. Please note this data is correct as at 1st August 2014.







**HOMES** OAK FRAME SELF-BUILD



### First Floor Bedrooms

The master bedroom (above), which features a dressing room and en suite, occupies one end of the first floor — separated from three further bedrooms by a galleried landing (seen top right). The vaulted ceilings and exposed oak frame add architectural interest throughout the first floor spaces


real sense of déjà vu when we walked through the frame on site,” says Debbie, who completed many of the tasks that fall between the trades — such as installing the damp-proof membrane and the floor insulation — herself.

Surrounding the oak frame is a highly insulated softwood stud frame that incorporates Oakwrights’ WrightWall and Wright-Roof — an airtight encapsulation system with breathable cellulose insulation. Externally, the house has been clad in untreated oak weatherboarding with natural slates on the complex multi-level roof. The windows are a highly efficient composite made up of timber clad in aluminium.

Once the building was watertight the oak frame was cleaned internally with a blasting method by Farrow Eco Systems. Hot water is introduced into the blast stream to envelope dust particles in a fine mist, and the combination of high-pressure steam and sand removes stains and marks.

The couple opted to use the Posi-Joist flooring system for the first floor, as ceilings are fully vaulted upstairs and joists under the galleried section of landing needed to accommodate all electrical cables, plumbing pipework and ducting for the ventilation and heat recovery system.

Underfloor heating has been installed on the ground floor, with electric underfloor heating in the first floor bathrooms. Despite a flood caused by a subcontractor accidentally drilling through a pipe, the house was completed on schedule for Christmas 2012.

“After spending so much time on site it was very strange to move in, and it took a few weeks before the house felt completely like home,” says Debbie. “We’ve now grown used to the large spaces, the light and the way the house connects to the outside. We wouldn’t consider moving — this was always intended to be a home for life.” 



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HOMES OAK FRAME SELF-BUILD

# The Project

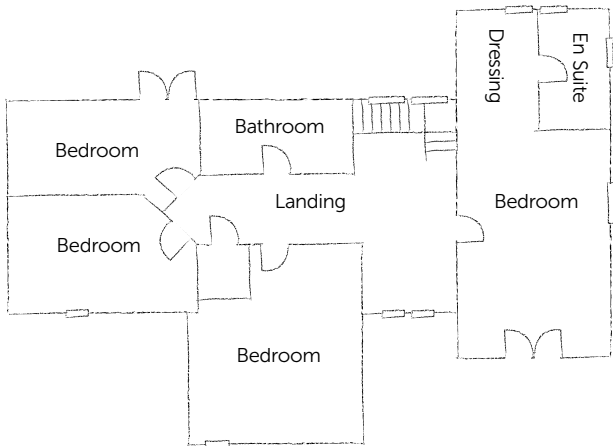


**Pete Tonks**  
Designer

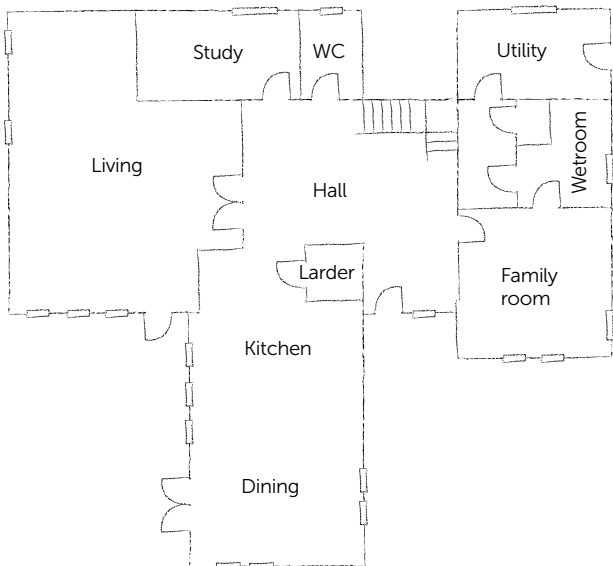
## DESIGNER'S VIEW

This project is special because it was built in an old woodland orchard, so from a design perspective we wanted to create a traditional woodland house rather than just a barn. Its uniqueness is within its layout and spatial qualities, which were all focused on the clients and how they wanted to live in the future. The house was designed to the Lifetimes Homes standard and uses natural materials, including a green oak frame and recycled cellulose insulated encapsulation panels. It is also highly specified with renewables, including an air-source heat pump and solar panels, as well as rainwater harvesting system. As a designer and a big fan of woodland/barn-style homes, both myself and Oakwrights are extremely proud of this project, which was always intended to be a contemporary spin on a traditional wood-clad home.

### First Floor



### Ground Floor



## SUPPLIERS

### Design, oak frame, roof/wall panels and oak cladding

Oakwrights .....oakwrights.co.uk; 01432 353353

### Face-applied glazing

Black Pig Frame Finishing .....blackpig.me

**Foundations** Piling and Drilling Ltd.....piling-drilling.co.uk

**Roofing** A Royden Roofing Services.....01953 456784

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**Drylining** CG Interior Solutions.....07831 274737

### Carpentry and general building

Acorn Building Services .....07788 907200

**Plastering** Fuller Plastering.....01353 863438

**Staircase** Marretti Stairs.....marrettistairs.com

**Sanitaryware** Duravit.....duravit.co.uk

**Sanitaryware supply** Cambridgeshire Bathrooms .....  
.....cambridgeshirebathrooms.co.uk

### Kitchen and utility

IKAS Kitchen Design Centre.....ikas.co.uk

### Curtains and blinds

Cambridge Interiors.....cambridge-interiors.co.uk

## SELECTED COSTS

Piled foundations and ring beam	£25,000
Oak frame	£67,000
Heating, hot water and ventilation systems, including PV and solar thermal panels, heat pump and MVHR system	£31,000
Windows, doors and rooflights	£37,000
Drylining and plastering	£20,000
Flooring, tiling and decoration	£30,000
Kitchen, utility and appliances	£23,000
Staircase	£25,000
Electrics and fittings	£24,000
Sanitaryware and plumbing	£16,000

## BUILD TIME

- Jan 07** Sealed bids for plot submitted
- Aug 07** Plot purchase completed
- Jan 09** First planning application submitted
- Sep 10** Planning permission approved
- Jul 11** Oak frame erected
- Nov 11** Watertight shell
- Jun 12** First fix
- Dec 12** Second fix and house completed





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**If you're planning a renovation or extension project, making sure you have the right type of insurance is critical for your peace of mind**

**D**id you know that your normal house insurance doesn't cover your property if you are altering it through an extension, renovation or conversion, including the loft and garage?

Many homeowners assume that their home insurance policy will continue to provide cover if they decide to carry out a major home-improvement project, but often this isn't the case as a lot of policies have an exclusion — meaning you aren't protected if you alter the structure of your building.

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## QUICK IDEAS

# Stone Flooring: The Five-Minute Expert

It is the flooring material of choice for many of our key rooms.  
Natasha Brinsmead explains how to choose the best



Sloane Parquet limestone flooring from Artisans of Devizes costs £82/m<sup>2</sup>



These Shepton flagstones in a worn finish from Ca' Pietra cost £54/m<sup>2</sup>

### Which Stone?

**SLATE** is hugely popular for floors, as it is hard-wearing, low-maintenance and available in a huge range of colours and finishes.

**Pros:** It's one of the more affordable stones, starting from around £20/m<sup>2</sup>.

**Cons:** Very cheap, poor-quality slates damage easily.

**LIMESTONE** is the perfect choice for contemporary and traditional homes alike, and offers a timeless, light and airy quality.

**Pros:** It looks fabulous as large-format tiles, is naturally warm underfoot and gives a neutral background.

**Cons:** Very light shades show up dirt easily, so consider a more rustic product if you have children or pets. Prices start from at least £35/m<sup>2</sup>.

**TRAVERTINE** has a more rustic appearance and is a good option for those looking for a cheaper alternative to limestone.

**Pros:** It has a lower price tag than limestone, starting from around £16/m<sup>2</sup>.

**Cons:** It's a fair bit softer than limestone however and it is hard to keep a good shine with this stone.

**SANDSTONE** is warm and easy to live with, lending a lovely raw beauty.

**Pros:** It's hard-wearing and slightly more unusual than stones such as limestone and slate.

**Cons:** There's less colour variations than other stones and it's more expensive too; prices start at around £48/m<sup>2</sup>.

**MARBLE** flooring is luxurious and available in some stunning patterns and colours, making a real statement in the home.

**Pros:** It's very resilient and full of character.

**Cons:** Marble stains easily — acids such as lemon juice, etc. mark it easily, which can be an issue in kitchens. Better quality marble flooring starts at around the £40/m<sup>2</sup> mark.

**GRANITE** is super resilient and repels water and stains with ease. It's perfect for contemporary settings and costs from £30/m<sup>2</sup>.

**Pros:** It's one of the hardest stones out there, with a beautiful shine and colour variations.

**Cons:** However, it's cold underfoot and very unforgiving if you happen to have butter fingers.







Portland tiles (£6.84 each) with slate inserts (£2.40 each) from Haddonstone have been laid in this orangery



## DIY?

Think twice. Very large-format stone tiles are incredibly heavy and can be hard to get right. It is likely that you will have spent a fair amount of your budget on your new tiles, so don't ruin things with a shoddy DIY job where laying costs at £7-£10/m<sup>2</sup> are relatively cheap.

The 'Nature' large-format black slate-effect flooring from Tile Mountain, actually made from porcelain, does not require sealing and is incredibly durable. Each tile is created using ink-jet technology to enable a realistic natural look, with every tile having a unique appearance. Prices start at £34.99/m<sup>2</sup>



These Burnt Sienna slate tiles from Original Style's Earthworks range cost £59.95/m<sup>2</sup>

### The Perfect Finish

The finish you go for will very much influence the overall look and performance of your stone floor. Honed finishes are smooth and ideal for contemporary settings, while riven tiles hide a multitude of stains and will mask any DIY laying errors well. If you opt for an antiqued or weathered finish – which look fabulous in period settings and conversions – be aware that dirt can easily become ingrained in the pits and cracks, and it will shred a sponge mop to pieces.


### The Inside Outside Trend

Stone flooring not only looks great inside – it can be the perfect paving material for exterior spaces too. With sliding, bi-fold and patio doors a huge favourite with many at present, forming a seamless link between inside and out, it makes sense to

highlight the link between the two spaces by carrying the same stone flooring out from living areas to a terrace beyond. Slate, limestone, sandstone, granite and even marble can be suitable for both interior and exterior applications.

### Getting Your Order Right

Stone is a wholly natural product and as such is not uniform, with colours varying widely from batch to batch, even from the same quarry. All of this means that it is important to order enough stone to complete the job in one batch – this reduces the risk of mismatched stone.

It also makes sense to order more than you need, not only to account for any wastage that might occur, but also in case you need to replace any sections of the floor down the line and want the new stone to match the existing. 



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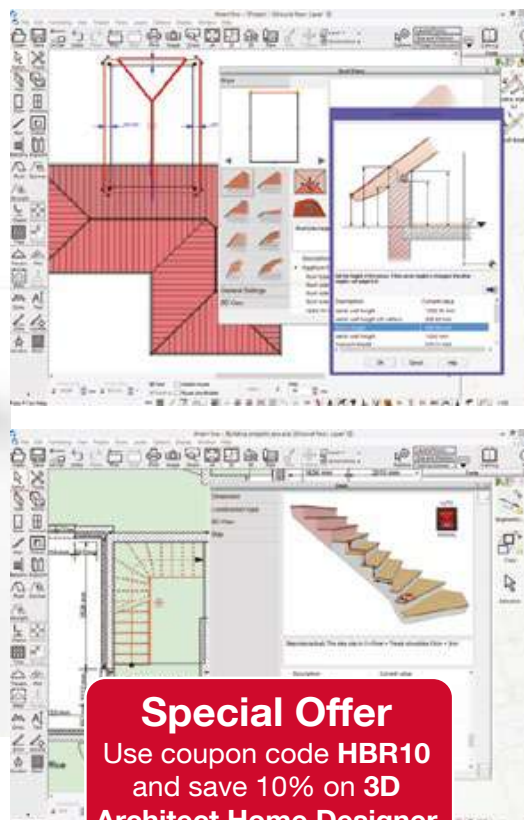
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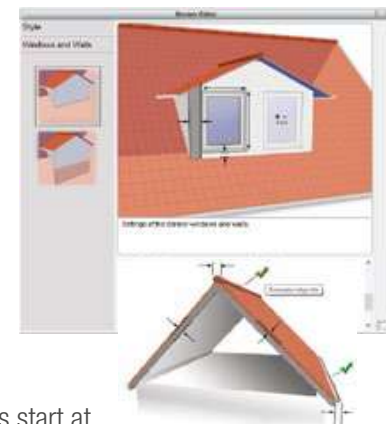
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HOMES CONTEMPORARY-STYLE SELF-BUILD

# Looking Forward

In the garden of their former home, Pete and Lot Clark have built a new home that manages to combine striking design with a sensitive approach to its site

Words: Jason Orme  
Photography: Jeremy Phillips



## PROJECT NOTES

**Project:**

Contemporary-style self-build

**Location:**

Derbyshire

**Dates:** Jun 12

– Jun 13

**Size:** 172m<sup>2</sup>**Land cost:**

Already owned

**Build cost:**

£327,900

(£1,906/m<sup>2</sup>)



### New Meets Old

Pete and Lot's new home is situated in the corner of the garden of their former home on a significant slope. Architect Robert Evans positioned the home at the top of the plot, building it into the slope so that it could simultaneously nestle down to minimise its impact on their original home and enjoy the views to the max



## HOMES CONTEMPORARY-STYLE SELF-BUILD



### THE QUICK READ

➤ Pete and Lot Clark have built a contemporary-style home, designed by Evans Vettori Architects, in the garden of their original home

➤ Built into a slope with large glulam beams supporting a flat roof, the home enjoys fabulous views

➤ The open plan living, kitchen and dining area is situated on the first floor. The house has been designed with future use in mind, including space for a lift



Planning ahead doesn't suit all of us, but in Pete and Lot Clark's case, the proof is most definitely in the pudding. The result of all this forethought – Howghyll, a striking contemporary home in Derbyshire – is a beautiful example of how modern design, done well, is the obvious solution when building a new home. It suits its owners, the site and the landscape perfectly and, of course, it's not something that just happened. Pete and Lot are careful, sensible, analytical people and the architect they employed, Robert Evans of Evans Vettori Architects, is an architect skilled in creating beautiful buildings that are also totally practical and user-friendly. "It all began 35 years ago," begins Pete. "We moved to the village for work reasons and bought a lovely, and large, five bedroom Vic-



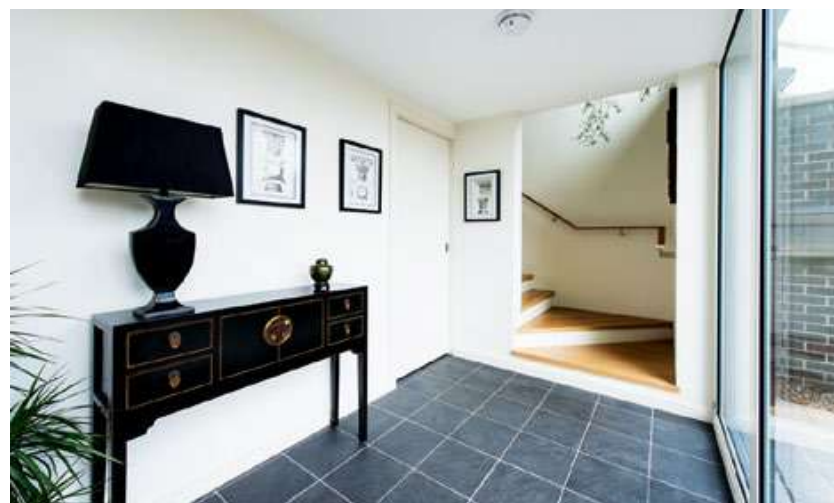


### Living Space

The home is effectively single storey but accessed via a staircase from the partial ground floor (below). It's largely open plan, with the staircase separating the dining/living and kitchen space. Large glazing and corner windows maximise light and views

torian house. It was situated on a two-acre corner site and we had many happy times there, raising our two boys and loving working on the garden — both Lot and I are keen gardeners. Given the size and position of the site, however, we always knew that a particular part of it, with access to the road away from the corner, would be suitable for us to build a new home on when the time was right.”

And, with the children now raising families of their own and the garden (large and sloping) beginning to become a more formidable beast to tackle, the time was right. Lot takes up the story: “We portioned off a small section of the garden – perhaps no more than one-fifth of an acre – on one of the more sloping parts of the land and set about the process of building ourselves a home that would suit our changing circumstances.”











### Single Storey Living

The kitchen has curved corners to soften the impact as you enter the private part of the home. A gently sloping corridor, lit by a clerestory window at the top of the brick wall (left of shot) provides access to the bedrooms as well as a glass-walled sunroom. The wood floors are from Kährs

A mere 35 years in the planning, Pete and Lot had ample opportunity to work out the best orientation and potential designs for their home. They wanted a garden that would give them enough interest but be easier to maintain, a single storey space with all the living areas, kitchen and bedrooms on one level, plenty of storage, and of course a home flexible enough to comfortably accommodate their grown-up family for visits. It also needed to be highly energy efficient to minimise ongoing running costs. A significant slope and the desire not to negatively impact on their existing home was critical — the new home was to sit directly between the old place and the spectacular views over the Amber Valley to the east.

The couple approached a local planning consultant to achieve outline planning approval on the site, which was successfully obtained. “The problem was that he detailed the position of the new house on the plans but didn’t make it a reserved matter,” explains Lot. “It meant that the position of the house was tied to the planning approval, so if we wanted to move it in the future, we would have to start all over again.”

Pete and Lot met and received ideas from several architects. “They were all good, but none of them were brave enough,” says Lot. “We liked modern designs – perhaps after years of living in a Victorian house – and were keen to be a bit bolder with it. Luckily I’d remembered reading an article about Evans Vettori Architects in a national newspaper a few years before and noticed that they were based in nearby Matlock. When Robert Evans began to come up with some initial sketches, we knew we had met our designer.”

Robert takes up the story: “It started with the idea of a defining red-brick ‘walled garden’ to the original house, which provides clear separation and is used as the rear exterior wall of the new home.” The decision was made to move the house to the back of the site and nestle it into the slope, maximising the views to the east and minimising the impact on the existing home. The house is







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effectively built into the slope, minimising the amount of spoil to be removed and, in taking the house away from the street frontage, making it less prominent.

A large open plan space housing the kitchen, living and dining space is situated on the same floor as the bedrooms (because the site slopes into the corner, the living rooms are effectively raised while the bedrooms open out on to the gardens). The entrance level from the driveway has been constructed to allow a lift to be easily fitted should the need arise — more perfect planning.

The engineering solution is smart and provides the house with much of its beauty. The house has reinforced concrete raft foundations, with a reinforced masonry retaining wall 'box' in the basement. Glulam beams are supported on the rear retaining wall to the one side and galvanised steel posts to the other. This is a house that is not afraid to show its structure and is all the more impressive for it. You really get a sense of it opening out of the slope. The sloping flat roof is in fact an intensive green roof with a biodiverse seed mix, consisting of 100mm growing medium on drainage layer on membrane — again, all to minimise the visual impact.

Pete and Lot, despite having mains gas close by, opted for an air-source heat pump to power the underfloor heating. "In all honesty I'm still getting used to the controls," confesses Pete, "but we're very happy with the choice. Electricity bills — which obviously include all our heating as well as power and lighting — are below £1,000."

This is a home built to exceptional standards — critical in realising the beauty of Robert's original concept. The project was managed by a main contractor who was skilled in drawing out the detail in the contemporary scheme, and run through a JCT contract and supervised by the architects. "It was stressful, of course," says Pete, "but we're delighted with the result."

And who wouldn't be? There is a feeling of unusual serenity about the new house. Even on a bleak Wednesday morning, the large corner glazing section provides a focus for the home, and Pete and Lot say they feel more connected to the seasons. They're also safe in the knowledge that proper planning has resulted in a home that they can enjoy for years to come and it works perfectly for them. That it is beautiful to look at, of course, is a nice bonus for the rest of us. 

### Front Elevation

The home is a simple masonry structure with a flat green roof supported off glulam beams which form a feature in their own right. A low-maintenance garden helps the new home bed in. The windows are from Senior Architectural Systems







## HOMES CONTEMPORARY-STYLE SELF-BUILD

# The Project



**Robert Evans**  
Architect

### ARCHITECT'S VIEW

The brief was to design a new three bedroom house on a section of the land within the gardens of a Victorian house. The clients were the existing occupants of the house; they wanted to create a new home that would be more user-friendly as they get older.

Consequently, the house was designed to be fully accessible and Approved Document M of the Building Regulations compliant. Flexibility was left in the plan to allow for the future installation of a platform lift from the ground floor if the need arises.

The approach was to create a new garden wall along the western boundary of the site to separate the new home from the grounds of the existing house. The form of the new house is very simple and is proposed to be read as two blocks — the living and sleeping blocks, linked by a simple glazed sunroom space.

Externally, the site is terraced to take advantage of the natural levels and create gardens of different uses up the site. The natural ground levels of the site mean that the level of the first floor of the new house will be over 2m below the ground floor of the existing house, so that the new house will appear essentially as a single storey building. Only a clerestory window and the roof edge are visible from the existing house above the new garden wall, which does not interfere with views over the site to the valley beyond and gives an attractive and seemingly natural end to the existing garden area. The garden wall and terracing walls match the red brickwork of the original house to complete the simple palette of materials used here.

### SUPPLIERS

**Architects** Robert Evans, Andy Thomas and Rachel Haynes at Evans Vettori Architects ..... 01629 760559

**Consultants (structural)** Norder Design Associates ..... 01773 824414

**Consultants (M&E)** William Bailey Mechanical Services.....01773 853703

**Main contractor** Carter Construction..... 01332 381601

**Brick (plinth)** Ibstock..... 0844 800 4575

**Windows** Senior Architectural Systems.....01709 772600

**Cold-applied tanking** Grace Construction Products.....01753 490000

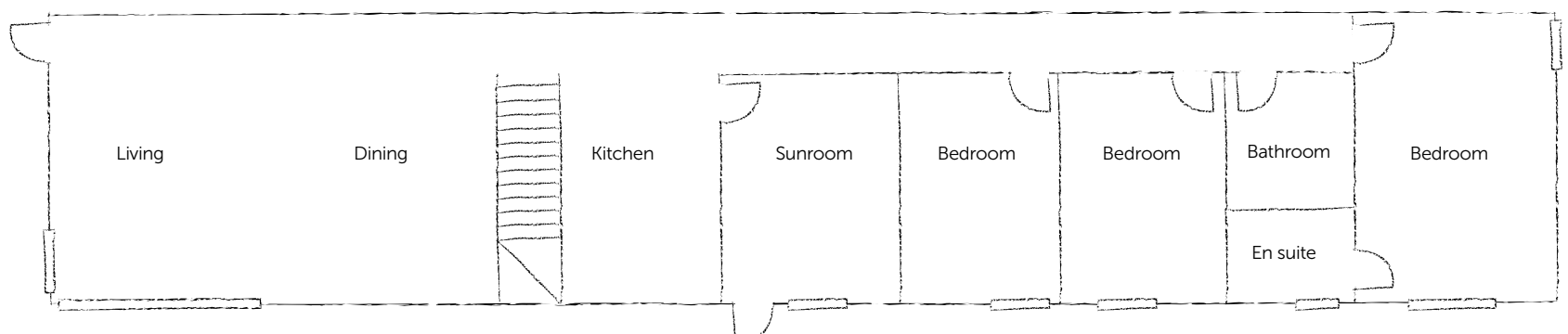
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### Below: Floorplan

The single storey house is split into two distinct areas – for living and sleeping – separated by a glass sunroom. Three bedrooms all have access on to private garden space and the bathrooms are all kept together for ease of installation. Long floorplans like

this are notoriously tricky, but Robert and the team at Evans Vettori Architects got around the corridor problem by maximising natural light with the introduction of a clerestory window sitting on top of the rear wall and generous ceiling heights.







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## ROOM DESIGN

# Living Room Design Masterclass

**The living room is different things to different people and designing one from scratch means there is lots to consider, says Natasha Brinsmead**

## ZONE THE SPACE

Living rooms are often used for more than just one purpose — you might find yourself relaxing at the end of a particularly hard day there, or entertaining friends, playing with the children or even working from home in this room.

Whether yours is a compact living space or a room of more generous proportions, it pays to view the room in terms of zones; though do think carefully about what you use the room for before sectioning the space, either visually or physically. This might be as simple a task as using a screen or room divider that doubles as storage to conceal your work space or play area, arranging your seating in a cosy cluster around the fireplace for entertaining, or even creating an intimate reading corner using shelving and a well-worn armchair. You could also use a different type of flooring, or even vary the ceiling or floor levels to define the various areas.



## GET THE LIGHTING RIGHT

Avoid, at all costs, relying on just a single overhead pendant in the living room — not only will it create a very one-dimensional, downward type of light, but it will do nothing to create the different moods required in this space.

Instead, use a range of lighting types, such as wall lights, downlights within alcoves and a selection of floor and table

lamps, in order to provide pockets of light around the room — and be sure to set them on dimmers. Don't forget to highlight certain features in the room either — a spot above the fireplace or tucked into an inglenook perhaps, or picture lights and even concealed lighting beneath built-in shelving or seats will all add to the interest of the room.







## FURNITURE CHOICES

Start by thinking about your seating and how it will be arranged. Ensuring you have enough seating for when guests visit is important; this can sometimes be an issue in smaller rooms. Along with a large sofa (modular models work well in both large and small spaces and can also help with 'zoning'), include occasional seating too — built-in window seats or upholstered ottomans are all good examples.

It makes sense to arrange your seating around a coffee table in order to create a sociable feel in the room, but avoid the thought that all seating must be pushed

up against the wall. Pulling the sofa out a little and placing a sideboard or console behind it works on a visual and a practical level and provides a useful spot for lamps, reading material and so on.

Ensure the furniture you choose is all in proportion with the size of the room — compact sofas in large rooms leave the space feeling cold and cavernous, while a chunky, large sofa will just seem intrusive in smaller, cramped spaces. Think about their height too — rooms with low ceilings will benefit from low-level furniture, for example.

## THINK ABOUT LOCATION

If you are building or completely remodelling, aim to position your living room in such a way that it feels like a retreat as opposed to a walkway — if you have to walk through it to access other rooms it can take away some of the relaxing appeal the space is supposed to have.

Living rooms work best when they have direct access to the outside space, so if possible, locate this room so that you can open it up to the elements when the mood takes you — patio doors of some form not only add to the space visually but also extend the space when open.

## CREATE A FOCAL POINT

Some kind of focal point is essential in the living room if it is to feel cosy. While fireplaces are the ideal, acting as the perfect anchor around which the rest of the layout is hinged, there are other ways of creating a point of interest.

If you have a great view, then turn this into the focal point by arranging seating around the window from which to admire it. An oversized mirror or a piece of art leaning up against the wall can work well too, as does using just one wall to display a gallery of your favourite pictures, an interesting textured plaster finish or feature wallpaper.

Using a statement piece of furniture, such as a striking oversized coffee table, will do the trick if you really are lacking in any architectural points of interest.



BOTTOM: SIMON MAXWELL; TOP: ALISTAIR NICHOLLS; TOP RIGHT: ANDREW LEE



# Designers on Living Rooms



**Jane Burnside**  
is an architect  
and author of  
*Contemporary  
Design Secrets*  
[janedburnside  
architects.co.uk](http://janedburnsidearchitects.co.uk)

## "Not Just a Good Room"

The living room will be different things to different people. For some it will be 'the good room', mainly used for family get-togethers; for others it will be a special place to retreat from the whirl of family life. Living rooms and family rooms are mostly occupied during the afternoon and the evening. Accordingly, these rooms often benefit from a southerly and, ideally, a westerly aspect.

Some people think they only have to have a 'good room': an adult-only zone with expensive furniture that is only used once a year. I can almost hear the ticking clock on the mantelpiece! But the living room can be so much more than this. If designed as part of your home – reflecting the way you actually live as opposed to how you think you might live – the living room can be the most important space. After all, why put all this expense into a 'good room' that only gets used at Christmas – it would be cheaper to take everyone out!

To get the most out of your living room, you need to think first about how you could use and enjoy it in different scenarios: relaxing on your own, or entertaining family or throwing a party. Then design the room with those activities and needs in mind.

## "It's Not a Singular Room"

When designing rooms in a house, including the living room, the essential starting point is to think carefully about what you are going to use them for.

A space should service needs, enhance one's living experience and it should be a place where people can enjoy congregating. At most, it should be somewhere that lifts the spirit.

To us, the typical definition of a 'lounge' is no longer a singular room and is in fact two spaces, one of which is a comfortable and relaxing space where friends and family can be together in an informal setting. We generally incorporate this space into an open plan layout, linked from a kitchen and dining space. This area should benefit from high ceilings and a feeling of airiness. We like these spaces to be surrounded by large sliding glass doors that open up on to a terrace, and the furniture should therefore be orientated to a view out of the space through to the garden and beyond.

The other type of living room is the 'snug'; a more introverted space where you could spend time alone working, reading or watching television. A central focal point, such as a TV or fireplace, helps to provide a sense of retreat and solace.



**Andy Ramus,**  
Director of AR  
Design Studio  
[ar.design  
studio.co.uk](http://ar.designstudio.co.uk)

## "It Should Reflect the Owners' Lifestyle"

The living room is personal and needs to reflect the owners' lifestyle – it is essential to analyse this first. Some of us want to feel cosy and see the living room as a space for watching television by the fire; some of us want to sit and read the paper with big bi-fold doors opening on to the garden. This also relates to the location of the living room; some clients want to retreat to a quiet living area which is separate from the open plan kitchen/dining area, others want to feel like it is an extension of the space. Both requirements can sometimes be accommodated by the use of sliding partitions, at least one solid wall to locate the TV and fireplace, blinds/curtains to control natural light and flexible lighting. **H**



**Annie Martin,**  
Architect  
[anniemartin.co.uk](http://anniemartin.co.uk)











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## PROJECT NOTES

**Project:** Barn-style self-build

**Location:**  
Gloucestershire

**Dates:** Oct 2012  
- Jul 2013

**Size:** 516m<sup>2</sup>

**Plot cost:**  
£700,000

**Build cost:**  
£746,000  
(£1,445/m<sup>2</sup>)

**Value:** Unknown





**HOMES** BARN-STYLE SELF-BUILD

# The Package Reborn

A meeting of minds between a Cotswolds-based architect and German package supplier has enabled Robin and Miyuki Walden to build a unique timber and steel-clad barn-style home

Words: Daisy Jeffery Photography: Simon Maxwell





## Exterior

The contemporary home takes its cue from surrounding agricultural buildings, both in form and in cladding materials, and as such, appealed the planners in this stone belt region. Corten steel clads the front elevation; Kebony timber, left untreated to weather to a silvery grey, and white render have been used to clad the rest of the house under a pitched zinc roof





## HOMES BARN-STYLE SELF-BUILD



### THE QUICK READ

➤ Robin and Miyuki Walden enlisted the services of German package supplier Hanse Haus to build a prefabricated barn-style home on a woodland site in the Cotswolds

➤ In order to appease the local planners, the Waldens' architect designed the home to take its cue from the nearby agricultural buildings, using Cor-ten steel cladding

➤ The energy-efficient home is highly insulated and airtight. The couple also specified a wide range of eco technologies in order to keep their running costs to a minimum

**A**s far as package builds go, Fox Furlong – the new barn-style home of Robin and Miyuki Walden in rural Gloucestershire – is quite different from anything that has been done previously. Traditionally associated with prioritising process over design quality, 'imported' packages have often struggled to gain credibility from both planners and the design community. Thanks, however, to the open-minded creatives at German supplier Hanse Haus, along with the vision of Cotswolds-based architect Renato Lusardi from Studio Lusardi, Robin and Miyuki have a striking Cor-ten steel and timber-clad new home. It's sympathetic to its sensitive location too, taking the form of a contemporary barn.

"Our journey first began when we went to one of the Homebuilding & Renovating Shows, as we were interested in self-build after a friend of ours had done it. After moving up from London we were living in a farmhouse which was very exposed to the elements and was so cold and cost us a fortune in heating, which is why we wanted to look for something which was of high quality with low ➤









running costs,” explains Miyuki. “I spent two years looking for a site for us and knew we also needed an outbuilding to be used as a workshop for Robin’s ceramics business. After viewing another property in the village, the estate agent then showed us a 1960s bungalow and when we walked round the woodland site we were instantly charmed and made an offer.”

### The Benefits of Using a Package Company

Visiting the Homebuilding & Renovating Shows, the couple had the opportunity to speak with various package suppliers and immediately realised that this was the best build route for them, offering both a hands-off approach and an energy-efficient home that came with the added benefits of a quick build time and a fixed price. “I knew the kind of house I wanted and I didn’t have the confidence that the UK companies were able to provide the same standard of house as the German manufacturers,” says Miyuki. “The insulation levels, for instance, that Hanse Haus offers is significant; for me they were really incomparable.”

Robin takes up the story: “The great advantage of the prefab system is that you are also much more aware of the final cost than you are with building the usual way. This was, for us, a massive plus. That’s not to say there are no surprises, as when you start to add extras on to match what you really want aesthetics-wise that’s when you notice a sharp rise in costs, but being able to visually see what the price is from the outset means that you don’t get hit with it later down the line.”

### Above: Solar Energy

A 16 photovoltaic 3.8kW panel array has been installed on the south-facing pitched roof to generate electricity for the house

### An Individual Design

“While Hanse Haus built the home, it was crucial we had our own architect as the planners insisted we respected the local Cotswolds style,” says Robin. “We were fortunate enough to not only have an architect with vision, but one who understood both modern and urban homes, and who was also from the Cotswolds region and so knew the local vernacular. Our architect Renato got it spot on. Once he had done the sketches he sent these off to Hanse Haus who gave him the parameters to work within — he had to understand their system and work with what they were able to produce in their factory,” explains Robin.

“The barn style really came about through Renato,” continues Miyuki. “Given the location surrounded by traditional Cotswolds stone buildings, he suggested that an agricultural design would be favourable with the planners, which it was. We also didn’t like the idea of having too much white render and he suggested using Corten steel to give a rustic effect, which works brilliantly. A friend of ours had also used Kebony cladding which we liked, and the zinc roof really finished it off — it also shows just how flexible Hanse Haus were as these aren’t materials they tend to use.” ➡



**SELF BUILD  
CONVERSION**

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Besides the kitchen and the staircase, the couple used Hanse Haus for pretty much everything. “We really wanted something magical in the hallway and so I looked for a specialist staircase designer who I found with M-Tech,” says Miyuki. “I also wanted to be able to run my cookery school from home and so needed to be able to specify a large, bespoke kitchen to house demonstrations.”

In order to design a home that met their needs, early planning was key. “Luckily Miyuki is an expert in space management,” says Robin. “All plans were drawn and she made cut-outs of our furniture to scale and moved them around the plans to work out where everything would go — even where the plug sockets needed to be!”

The interiors feel spacious thanks to open plan arrangements as well as voids in the hallway and in the kitchen — lifting the ceiling to create interest, while also providing a means of communication when the kids are calling downstairs to place their breakfast orders!

#### A Quick Build

After flying out to visit the Hanse Haus factory in Germany to choose their fixtures and fittings, the house, in true prefab style, was built in the company’s factory before being shipped over and erected on site. “The team on site were so responsive and reliable,” says Robin. “The lorries arrived on 17 March 2013 and the roof was on within five days — we were moved in at the end of July. None of that would have been possible without the dedication showed by the five-man team. It’s a method I really believe in and it’s definitely one of the ways forward for building over here.”

“We lived in the bungalow on site during the project to oversee everything,” says Miyuki who acted as lead throughout the build, with Robin acting as “tea-boy” (his words!). “Living on site is such ➡

#### Above: Kitchen Diner

The large open plan kitchen/dining/living area acts as a functional yet homely space. An impressive floor-to-ceiling corner window at the far end overlooks the garden and wood, and a long window over the kitchen also gives a panoramic views. The kitchen has been designed to house the large island (where up to eight people can be seated for Miyuki’s cookery classes). There’s also a spacious walk-in pantry (not shown here) which provides plentiful storage too

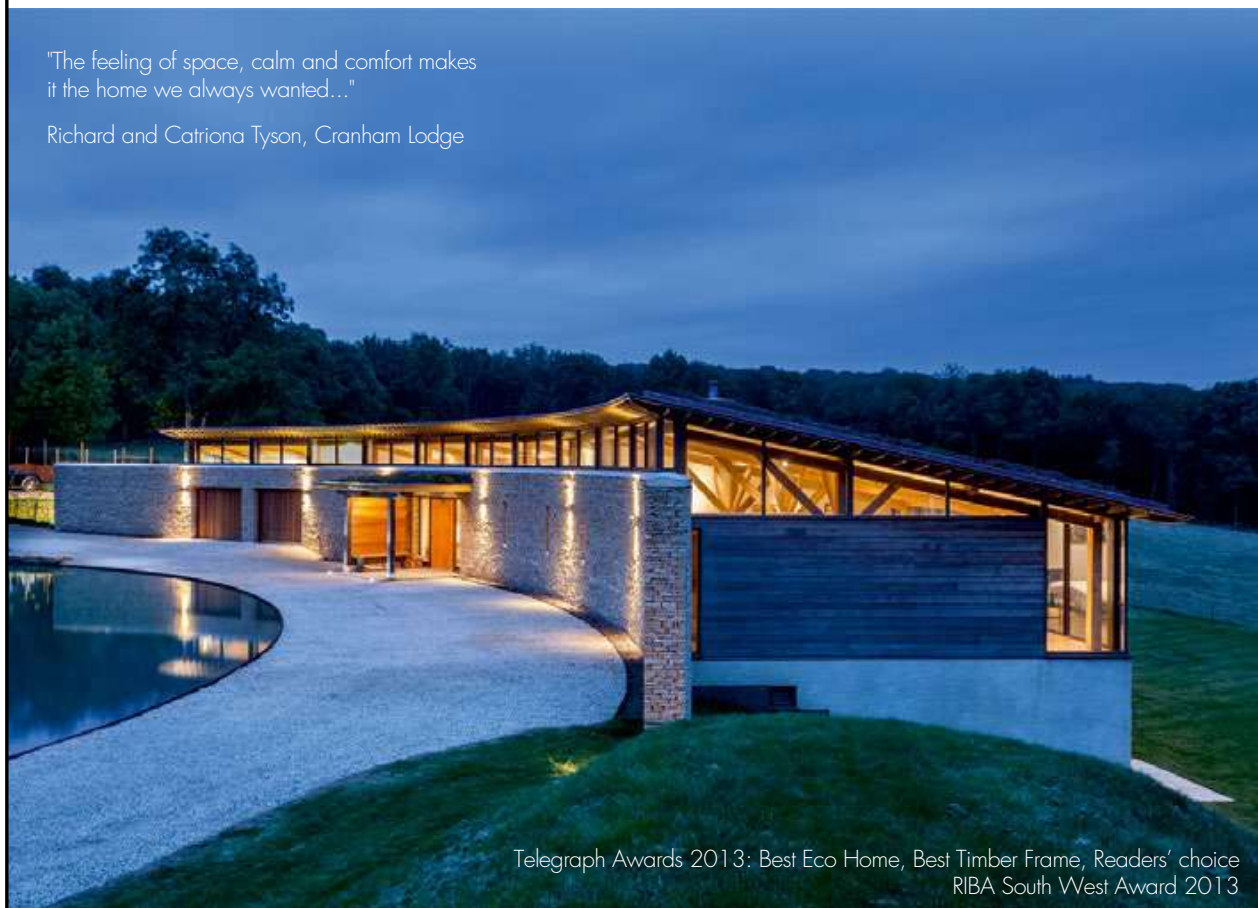


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## HOMES BARN-STYLE SELF-BUILD




a good idea,” he adds. “It was great to watch everything go up and to be there if anything was needed — although the team were so organised in knowing every detail of what they were doing I think they only asked us eight questions during the entire project!”

A separate guest annexe meanwhile was being built next-door at the same time as the house, and was designed by the same architect, although the couple instead chose a local builder to complete this element of the project.

### Creating an Energy-Efficient Home

Energy efficiency was a top priority for Robin and Miyuki, and the house has been packed with eco technology to keep costs down. A total of 16 photovoltaic panels line the south-facing roof, a borehole provides water, an air-source heat pump takes care of the home’s heating and hot water, and a ventilation system keeps the temperature of the home constant. Underfloor heating throughout provides comfort against the wood flooring, while triple-glazed windows along with masses of insulation keep the home airtight.

“The ventilation system was a good investment, but then again you simply can’t have a house like this without one as it would be too stuffy,” explains Robin. “The borehole is also great and the thought of every tap in the house having our own water is wonderful — the difference in our energy bills has been significant.

“The house has come together even better than we’d imagined and the spaces work so well. The house was built in accordance with our needs and it’s a real joy to live in.” 

### Above: Master Suite

Situated off the galleried landing, the master suite features a large wetroom complete with separate WC. The sanitaryware and tiles were all specified from Hanse Haus’s showroom at their factory in Germany





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HOMES BARN-STYLE SELF-BUILD

# The Project



**Robin and Miyuki  
Walden**  
Homeowners

**HOMEOWNER’S VIEW**

The spaces work so well — that’s what’s really magic about it. Because you’re designing for yourself you’re not having to compromise on space — all rooms have a purpose. In our old house we had a lot of wasted space, but not here. The only room we don’t use everyday is the guest room. The house really works so well for us and having two teenagers, who get to have their own space too.

The house was designed to look over the wood, so the windows to the side make the most of this. The open plan kitchen, dining and sitting area is a huge success, which we all enjoy as the centre of our family life. The kitchen was designed to accommodate an island of a certain length so that it works perfectly for demonstrations for the cookery business, and it’s a space that the whole family really live in and where we spend time together. The void in the ceiling (which is open to the first floor landing) works really well as it gives more light and an added sense of space. One tends to focus on the rooms but the wide landing upstairs and the spacious hall downstairs make a difference too.

We can’t speak highly enough of the fast, efficient build and the high standards of the very detailed finish. The key to success with a project like this though is to take your time. You can’t change your mind so you need to plan everything carefully at the beginning and don’t rush it. If you’re in a hurry then this is not the way to do it.

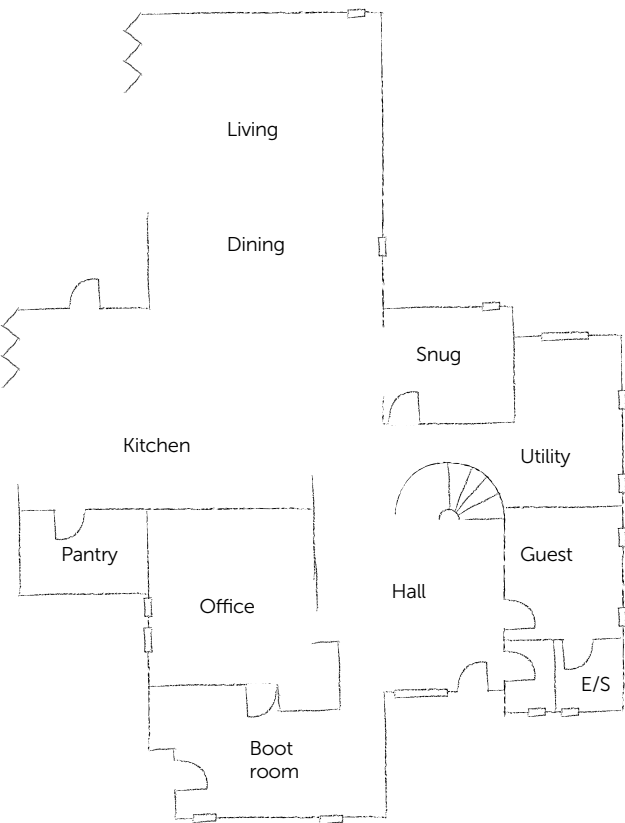
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Foundations / concrete slab	£70,000
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<b>Total</b>	<b>£746,000</b>

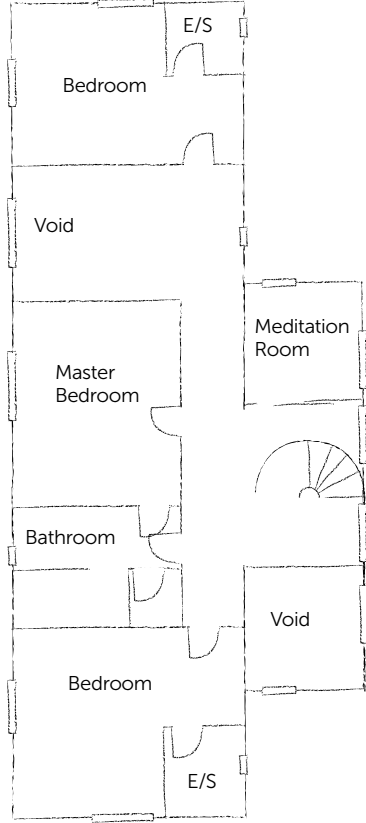
**SUPPLIERS**

<b>Package supplier</b> Hanse Haus .....	hanse-haus.co.uk
<b>Architect</b> Renato Lusardi.....	020 7684 7040
<b>Contractor</b> Nathan Clarke .....	nathanclarkebuilders.co.uk
<b>Groundworks</b> P&P Groundworks .....	pandpgroundworks.co.uk
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## REMODELLING



Before



# Before & After

## A bungalow receives a new storey and facelift. Designer Tony Holt explains how


**T**he clients' budget was restricted and so instead of replacing this 118m<sup>2</sup> two-bed bungalow, the decision was made to extend and remodel the property. The brief was to provide additional living space and create a modern home. A new storey was the solution, providing space for four bedrooms while allowing the internal layout of the ground floor to be opened up. Checks were taken early in the design process to confirm that the existing foundations were suitable to take the additional loadings of a new storey.

The whole top floor is new and was fabricated in timber on site using carpenters. The principal structure was formed in post and beam supported on a steel grid at first floor level. We chose to use the steel grid as the bungalow was an irregular shape. But placing a rectangular steel grid on top meant that the new roof would be kept simple, which would keep costs down and solve the problem of the ground floor shape. The new storey is larger than the ground floor, and the steel grid allows for overhangs on certain elevations — offering an interesting exterior.

The majority of the external materials were chosen for being both modern and low maintenance — except the cedar

cladding, which was used sparingly to create warmth and texture against the acrylic white render, and gives a fresh, contemporary feel. We continued the modern theme by replacing the bungalow's old glazing with aluminium windows and doors and switched the rainwater goods for galvanised steel replacements. The new roof has been relaid in man-made fibre cement slate which is not only cheaper than natural slate but also gives a more uniform look, and by choosing a lead roll ridge there is a slicker finish — using a standard ridge tile would have made the roof look bulky. The natural stone cladding was the most expensive material but again this was used sparingly as a feature where it would provide the most impact visually.

The property benefits from a wrap-around garden and so on the elevations breaking out to the garden we removed the walls and replaced them with full-height glazing with modern aluminium frames. Corner windows at ground level and on the new first floor have been specifically placed to make the most of the different aspects on site and to capture certain vistas.

Thanks to the remodel, the home now achieves 260m<sup>2</sup> of accommodation with boosted kerb appeal and open plan living more suited to modern life. 



**Tony Holt is an architectural designer and chartered architectural technologist ([tonyholt-design.co.uk](http://tonyholt-design.co.uk))**





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INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

# Ideas for Every Room

In this cut-out-and-keep gallery, Natasha Brinsmead offers the best spatial design ideas for all the elements of your new home

## THE KITCHEN



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### The Pod

The perfect solution for cavernous open plan areas such as those found in barn conversions, this kitchen 'pod' utilises an existing wall in order to form the main body of space; it also incorporates units, ovens and sink. The large island helps the kitchen feel contained within the space too.





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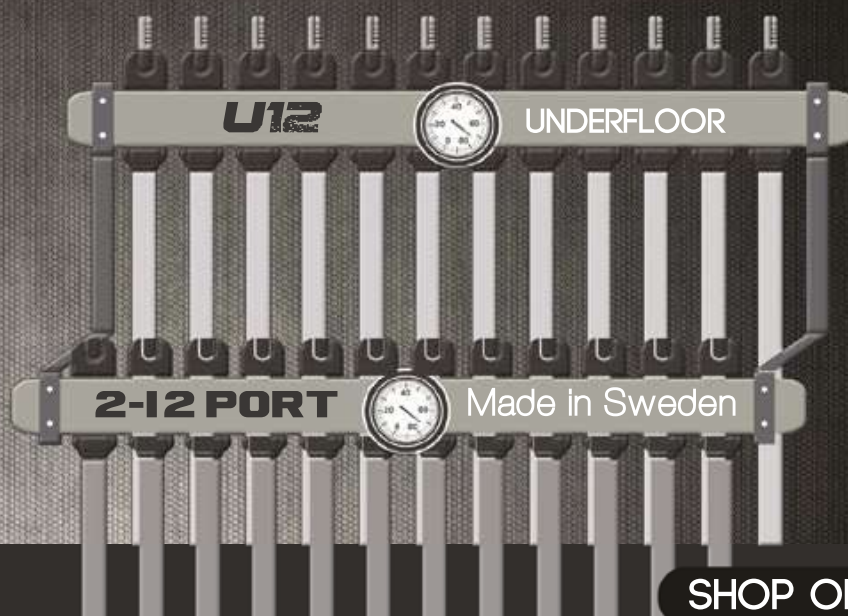
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# THE DINING SPACE



DAVID BARBOUR

## The Stylish Bunker

The distinctive curved ceiling of this living/dining space draws the eye upwards and away from the relatively narrow proportions of the room. Using pale timber cladding and strategically placed windows means the space is well-lit and gives enticing glimpses of the exterior.





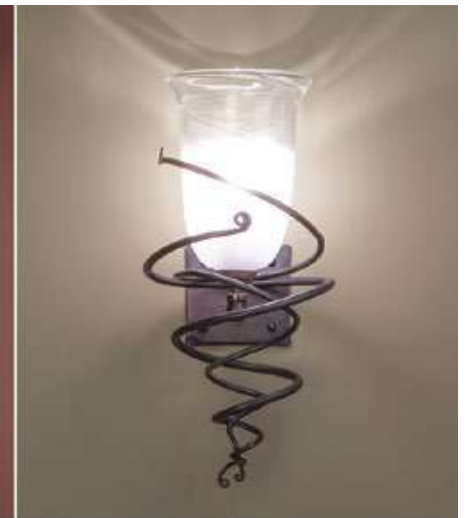
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**Above:** Alamere 900mm centre-fold shower enclosure, from £699.99

**Left and below:** Aliano two-door wall-hung vanity unit in Oak, from £199.99; inline basin, from £124.99; mirrored wall unit, £299.99; open wall unit in Oak, £79.99; two-door tower unit in white and grey gloss, from £319.99; wall-hung WC unit in white and grey gloss, from £169.99; wall-hung WC and seat, from £259.99

worktops, basins and handles in a variety of sizes, colours and finishes, you have everything you need to create the perfect bathroom. Its attractive design is also highly practical: clip-on backs, soft-close doors, generous service voids for easy plumbing access, and concealed fixings for easy cleaning all add up to a durable bathroom that installers and plumbers will love as much as you.

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HOMES BARN CONVERSION

# A Link to the Past

Rob and Claire Colwill have saved a Grade II\* listed medieval barn from ruin, transforming it into a home which embraces the best of ancient and contemporary craftsmanship

Words: Heather Dixon  
Photography: Jody Stewart







#### PROJECT NOTES

**Project:** Barn conversion

**Location:** Cornwall

**Size:** 395m<sup>2</sup>

**Land cost:** £500,000 (2010)

**Conversion cost:** £700,000  
(£1,772/m<sup>2</sup>)

**Value:** £1.25million







## HOMES BARN CONVERSION



### THE QUICK READ

⇒ Rob and Claire Colwill have saved a Grade II\* listed medieval tithe barn from ruin, restoring the characterful cruck frame trusses and converting the barn into a home

⇒ The house was created from two adjoining barns, which Rob and Claire have joined together with an impressive glass and steel roof — it brings natural light flooding into the house

When Rob and Claire Colwill bought a dilapidated old stable complex by the sea, they took a ‘half-a-million-pounds leap of faith’. Most people wouldn’t have given the assortment of rundown buildings a second glance, let alone gambled a small fortune on them, but the rusty old farm outhouses contained a golden nugget — a Grade II\* listed medieval barn.

Although it was on the verge of collapse, the barn’s stunning cruck frame was still intact, and Rob vowed to save it from wrack and ruin. “Our family was growing and we wanted to move to a bigger home,” he says. “We were living in an Edwardian house by the beach in Bude, and didn’t want to move far. The barn was less than a kilometre away, and also had land for a large garden. We knew that we were taking a huge gamble, but we were confident we could make it work.”

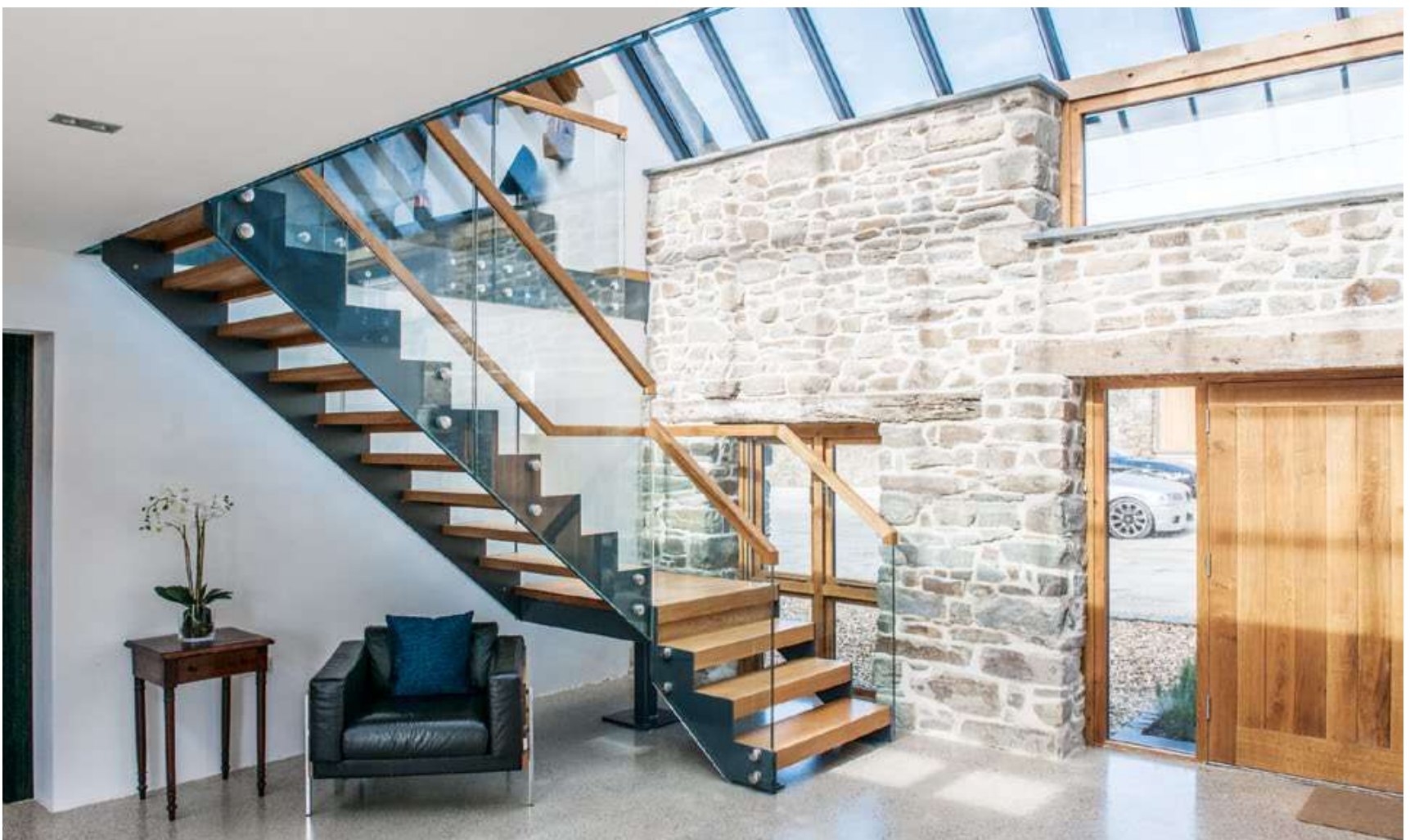
### A Challenging Site

The land and buildings, which the couple admit they bought for well over the asking price, came with a 10-year-old house. However, the site had been formerly used as a riding school and the house had an occupancy condition attached; it could only be lived in by the manager of the school. Fortunately, the family were able to have this condition lifted, and the house gave them a comfortable place to live during the conversion.





## **HOMES** BARN CONVERSION





## HOMES BARN CONVERSION



### Above: Kitchen Diner

The sleek contemporary kitchen is deliberately understated — allowing the building's structure to take centre stage. The AlnoStar Highline kitchen units are from Bradburys (they cost £460 per 600mm unit) and have been combined with an Antarctica Corian worktop (£425 per linear metre). An extra-large Big Bang Foscarini suspension light from Amos Lighting hangs beneath the glazed link

### Opposite: Central Atrium

The interiors feature a mix of exposed stone walls and those plastered in EcoCORK and lime. At the heart of the house, beneath the impressive glass and steel roof, is the staircase, complete with steel bridge which connects the kitchen diner with the living area; it cost £20,000 from Complete Stair Systems. The ground floor is finished in polished concrete flooring

Rob and Claire also agreed to wait six months for the previous owners to move out before eventually taking over the house. The delay gave them opportunity to assess the site, source an architect and structural engineer, and prepare the planning application to restore and convert the barn into one large dwelling. “The previous owners had unsuccessfully tried to turn it into a holiday let or several dwellings, but we wanted to turn it into one single family home for us,” says Rob.

Their plans were wholeheartedly supported by English Heritage, who had placed the barn on its national risk register and were keen to see it given a new lease of life, under the right circumstances. Backed by architect Martin Back's carefully considered approach, and with assurances that they would respect the integrity of the ancient building, Rob and Claire were finally granted planning consent to transform the barn into a 120ft-long house with high-vaulted ceilings. The main living area would be on the first floor to maximise the impact of the timber frame.

The barn was essentially in two halves — one side containing the medieval roof structure, and the other covered with a practical corrugated roof. The two sides would be united by a modern glass-and-steel mid-section — bridging the centuries. “Rather than blend the two sides we decided to have a very modern glass structure in the middle, with a glazed walkway inside, to create a very definite transition between the two ends of the barn,” explains Rob.

### The Conversion

Building work began in January 2013, and the couple hired a local contractor they had known for years. “No one could guess what ➤









problems we would face, so it was impossible to work to a fixed contract,” says Rob. “Fortunately, we had complete trust in the builder and paid by the hour.”

By this time, the couple had sold their previous home for £500,000, with the money funding the renovation budget. Rob project managed the build between running his estate agency and, with Claire, raising their three children.

The walls of the barn were ‘straight and true’, so a mini digger was used to dig up the old concrete floors, lay drains and to replace the floor with a waterproof membrane and concrete slab run through with steel mesh. “The foundations were so deep that we didn’t find the bottom of them, so, although we are in a wetland area, we had no concerns about the stability of the barn,” says Rob.

All the lintels were repaired or replaced with timber recycled from the site. The rotten 6.5-metre-long oak beams were also replaced with new oak to create the first floor. Steel brackets were discreetly installed at the ends of each to serve as a hidden tie system that would prevent the walls bowing from the pressure of the roof.

Next came the meticulous renovation of the stunning cruck roof timbers. A scaffold tower was built over the roof and sheeted with tarpaulin while specialist conservation carpenters dried out the timbers, inserting hidden steel supports where necessary in order to keep as many original beams as possible. “We decided it was better to fillet out the backs of the rotten timbers and drop steel plates into them so they could be repaired rather than replaced,” says Rob. “This way, we managed to keep 95 per cent of the original roof, with the remainder replaced with green oak from our own trees.” The medieval timbers, which were fitted with a protective modern rafter system over the top, took about four months to restore. ➤➤

#### **Above: Living Room**

The medieval cruck frame has been painstakingly restored and is now the key feature of the first floor sitting room. The woodburning stove, set against the stone gable wall, lends a contemporary twist

#### **Opposite: Bedrooms and Bathrooms**

All four en suite bedrooms are located on the ground floor, including the generous master bedroom (opposite, top). “The big light oak beams and lovely side light from the windows make the bedrooms feel really cosy and luxurious,” says Rob. The bathrooms feature sanitaryware from the Devon Bathroom Centre, alongside some quirky and characterful finds. “We found some old boards from the stables, which were covered in horse dung. We cleaned them up and used them to clad the bathrooms — they look fantastic!” explains Claire





AS FEATURED  
IN THE COLWILL  
CASE STUDY  
ON PAGE 140

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HOMES BARN CONVERSION




### First Floor

The new house is a tale of two halves — the new A-frames and steel ties are a contemporary counterpoint to the ancient barn, with its painstakingly restored cruck frame. Small original openings (left) have been retained allowing in natural light and becoming characterful features in their own right

The newer side of the barn was stripped of its corrugated roof, and the walls raised by a foot to bring them in line with the medieval barn. Five new A-frames were built to create a new roof, and the whole roof structure clad with salvaged Delabole rag slate; a material common to the local area.

Conservation windows and doors were installed to the existing openings and then the gaping ends of the two sides of the barn were fitted with a central steel structure, ready for glazing. “There was a delay so we had everything fitted and close to completion — except for a large tarpaulin covering the middle section,” says Rob. “When the glass finally arrived it slotted into place like a perfect jigsaw.”

Rob and Claire resisted moving in until all the snagging was completed, but it was worth the wait. “It’s exceeded all our expectations,” says Rob. “Our living space is compartmentalised, but with an open plan feel. We felt obliged to save the barn and to do it right, so it was always going to be a zero-compromise project. As a result, we not only have an extraordinary, stunning home, but have also saved a beautiful building from crumbling away.” 



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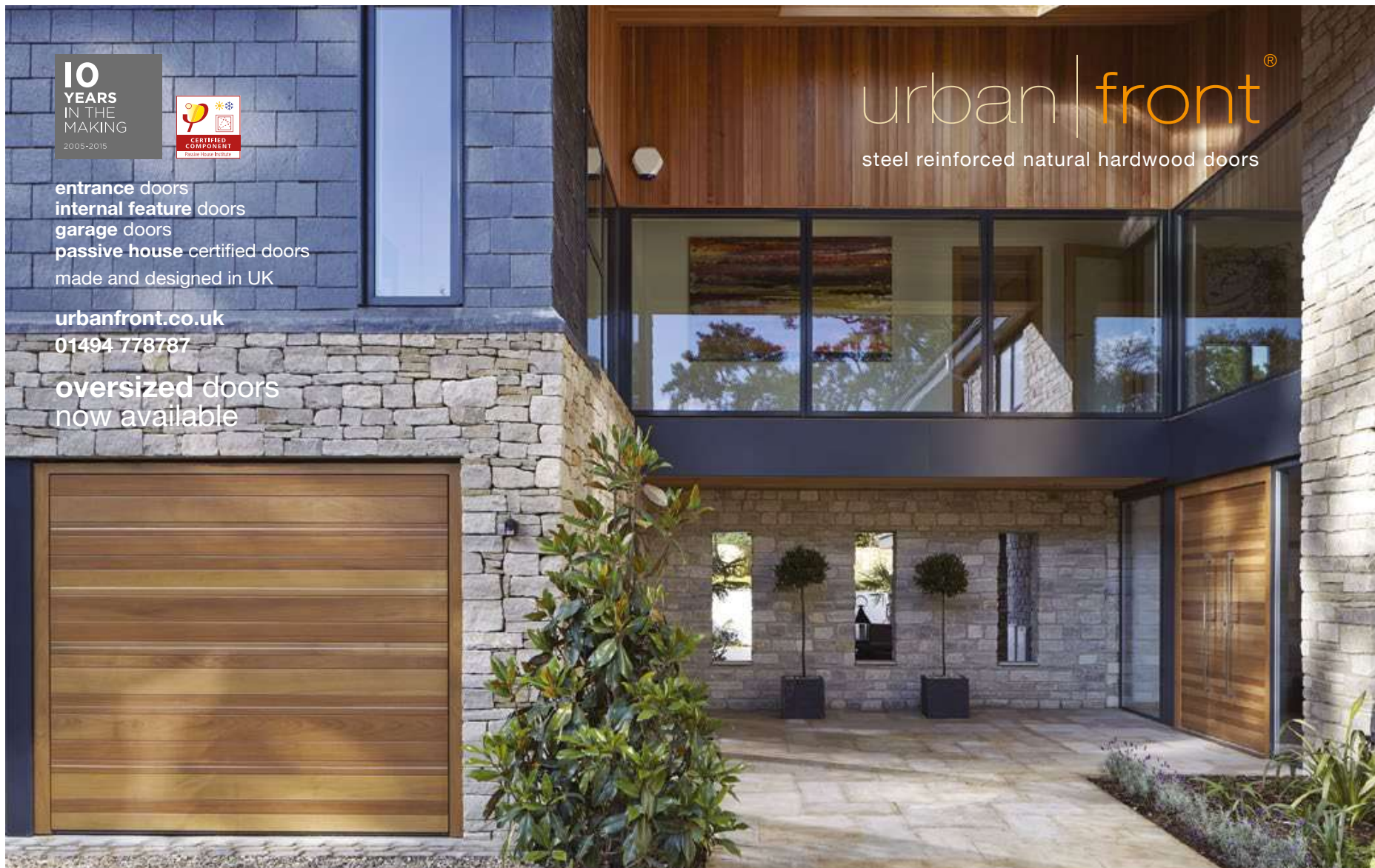


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HOMES BARN CONVERSION

# The Project



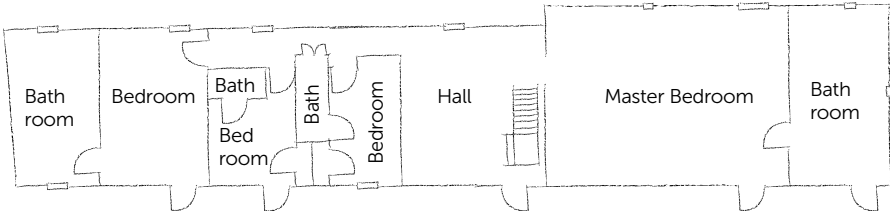
Martin Back,  
The Bazeley  
Partnership  
Architect

ARCHITECT’S VIEW

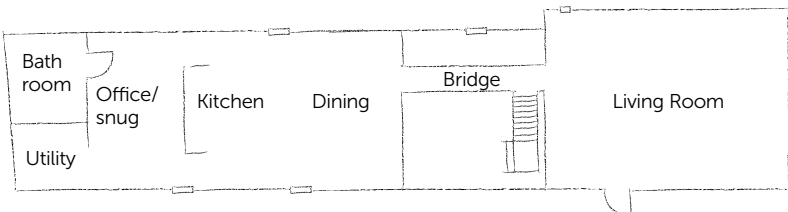
The design and development of this project was firstly about understanding fully the historic asset of the building and its contextual position and secondly, developing a clear and comprehensive brief with Rob and Claire. From these key positions, it was then possible to bring together a dynamic and highly experienced team of consultants and specialists to drive the ambitions of the project to a successful outcome.

Rob and Claire’s brief was to sensitively create a contemporary family dwelling which focused on the use of traditional and heritage materials. From the outset, the Colwills produced a clear brief of their intentions, which stressed the importance of recognising the history of the building and its unique context in the locality. Their approach was to let the design evolve to continually support their brief while also working proactively with English Heritage and the planning authority to secure the very best outcome for the survival of the building.

First Floor



Ground Floor



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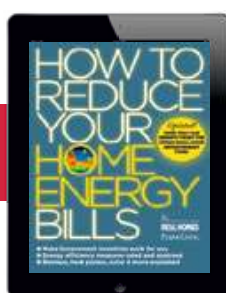


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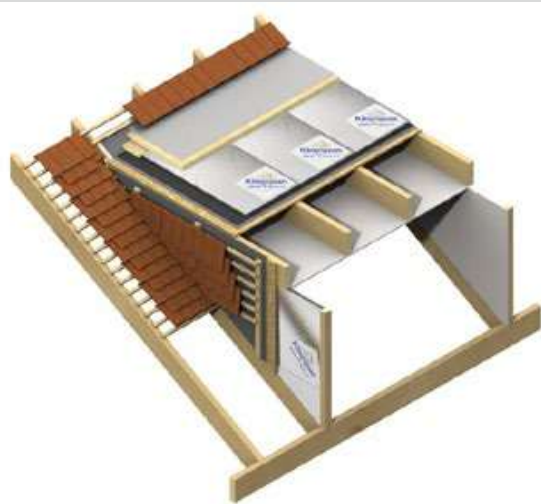
## Can Your Relationship Survive a Self-build? P.159



**Advice**

## The Rebirth of Brick P.174

- Plus:**
- 10 Ways to Stay on Budget P.167
  - HB&R's Build Cost Calculator P.170
  - Step-by-Step Guide to Self-build P.190



**Advice**

## How to Insulate a Dormer P.187





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# Can Your Relationship Survive a Self-build?

**Building a home together will challenge even the strongest couples, so how do you keep both your project and relationship on track? Daisy Jeffery explains**

**T**here's nothing like a building project to conjure up a couple's emotional issues, and no matter how stable your relationship may be, undertaking the unparalleled stress of a self-build can throw everything into chaos.

Just like having a child, many couples believe that taking on a project of this nature could save the relationship, when the reality is that the pressure of the tasks involved are more likely to wind up in resentment, arguments and perhaps in divorce. You need to have a solid foundation built on communication, and a bucket load of trust in one another, if you're serious about tackling a renovation — let alone something as big as a self-build.

According to a 2013 survey conducted by home design site Houzz, 46% of couples undertaking remodelling projects found the experience frustrating, and 12% of couples admitted that they considered separation or divorce during the project — you don't want to become one of those figures when it comes to your project. Speaking to life coaches, designers and architects who have witnessed the arguments (and break-ups) of couples first-hand, we explain how to take on the challenge of a building project without it costing you your relationship.

## PLAN AHEAD — DON'T RUSH

One of the common reasons behind on-site arguments between couples is due to being overwhelmed with the level of work. Most often this will be down to poor planning. Part of the early planning process is knowing what you both want from the outset, and sticking to it. "You have to be creative and have fun with it — look on Pinterest, create moodboards and discuss these together, and eventually you should find common themes to build on," says Laura Longville, therapist, life coach and co-author of *Break Ground Without Breaking Up*.

Understandably this is an exciting journey, but not one to be taken lightly, and rushing to start work without considering everything properly is likely to lead to problems down the line and disagreements when neither of you has the answer to why there are gaps in the project and elements of the works haven't been organised ahead of schedule. "Prepare and learn



**DAISY JEFFERY**  
Daisy is the Features Editor at  
*Homebuilding & Renovating*

ahead of time," encourages Laura. "Equip your project with a strong team and acquire a skill set to think like a contractor. Learn their jargon and about their culture — it can provide you with a greater level of insight and will help you interact with tradespeople."

Talking through your project in detail with your architect and analysing the design from the outset can help eliminate stress too, as award-winning architect Alastair MacIntyre of McInnes Gardner points out: "The advent of 3D mod-

elling has taken quite a bit of the risk out of the process, as both partners have an equal understanding of the likely outcome. They have the chance to analyse and discuss potential changes before the project is underway and consequences of change become too great."

## HAVE A FINANCIAL PLAN

Possibly the most sensitive subject surrounding a building project, you need to have a clear understanding of not only your joint income, but your own finances and what you are willing and able to contribute to the build. Finance is the biggest cause of arguments between couples and it is important to be honest with each other about what you have to spend on the build, as well as what you both deem acceptable to spend on finishing touches — one half of the couple may want to put money aside for a home gym, while the other might want to spend it on a kitchen or luxury sanitaryware. Discuss from the outset and be willing to compromise.

"With money at the centre of all building projects, couples who don't have a detailed budget prior to starting their project usually end up fighting about money. Many times this demolishes the foundation of the project and destroys the relationship," explains Sandy Berendes, interior designer and co-author of *Break Ground Without Breaking Up*. "If the topic of money causes strife in your marriage and you decide to add the stress of building or remodelling, you may be creating a blueprint for disaster. A good starting point however is by getting three bids for your building project. It is good to have choice and not be tied to an 'either/or' option. It is important to get as much detail on the costs as possible upfront. This will





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help reduce the amount of surprises or unexpected costs that come up. The bid you pick should reflect your needs, values and goals. It is wise to spend time preparing your budget as you want to make sure the bid reflects your desires. It may take some negotiation to get it just right, but take the extra time to do this as it sets the foundation for everything else."

Once you have a definite budget in place, plan to have at least a 20% contingency fund to allow for extras, in the event of something unexpected going wrong. "By having a 20% cushion to be used in emergencies really can help make a difference," says Laura Longville. "Put this contingency in a separate account if possible and don't think about or plan to use it. It's there for an emergency or unexpected costs. Most of the time the costs are more than what the couple is willing to spend, so then they have to pare down — you need to be sensible with your finances."

Sandy Berendes takes up the story: "You need to be honest. There have been cases of what we call financial infidelity where the wife has asked the designer or contractor to do something and pays in cash, and then has them write a separate invoice to show the husband so he doesn't know how much she spent."

## TEST THE BOUNDARIES

Building a house is going to test your relationship to its limits and not knowing how you will both cope is a worry in itself. Therapists across the pond in the US have taken to using a trip to IKEA as a 'communications test' following several couples admitting to fighting in the global furniture store — the idea being that if a couple can't even build a piece of flat-pack furniture together, then they shouldn't build something as big as a house. Even browsing round IKEA is said to induce stress among couples, with the reality of combining two individual lives starting to sink in — raising unspoken issues when walking round the room set-ups, such as who's going to be doing the cooking in the kitchen section, and raising alarm bells for young couples when they approach the children's area.

Testing out how you manage simple building tasks won't be as effective on simple flat-pack pieces such as a coffee table, but taking on larger items can be a recipe for disaster. Dr. Dur-

vasula, a professor of psychology at California State University, Los Angeles, has even labelled IKEA's enormous Liatorp media unit 'The Divorcemaker'. The bigger the project, typically the greater the challenge for the relationship.

Before embarking on your self-build, life coach Laura Longville also encourages couples to take a look at their attitudes towards the project. "There might be a case where you need to change your attitude. Do you have a 'can-do' attitude? If not, try to find one," she says. "Challenges will always be out there and your attitude and thoughts are the key holders to the stress you experience."

## APPOINT A DECISION MAKER

"The ideal situation is to have most of the decisions settled ahead of time," says Laura Longville. "When it's not possible to do this, each partner may have an area of expertise where they are more comfortable in making decisions. For instance, the wife may feel more confident about the inside of the house and the husband may feel good about anything to do with the exterior of the home." In the event of handling decisions that cannot be addressed prior to the build, or if there are any disagreements during the project, then from the outset there should be a mutual understanding that one of you will take on the role of lead decision maker. If one of you is less interested in the project and is happy to let the other take charge, or cannot commit wholly to the build due to work commitments, then the role of lead decision maker will naturally fall to the one who not only has the most time to devote to the project, but who is also the most interested and knowledgeable. If one of you is a keen DIYer and has knowledge or experience of tackling building jobs, liaising with trades, etc., then it is clear this person is best placed to take charge.

## DIVIDE RESPONSIBILITY

A self-build will carry with it all manner of tasks, from the early stages of hiring contractors and laying foundations to the construction, first and second fix, and the final stages of decorating — and you will both need to be clear who will be responsible for the different stages and the management of works. This is also important as the people you're hiring will need to know who to answer to and liaise with.

Start by knowing what you are most comfortable dealing with and what you will be confident in managing — if you feel anxious about overseeing certain elements then this could result in stress and sleepless nights. "Each person brings a strength and weakness to a project — have a conversation about what these are ahead of time and you'll avoid a lot of stress in the long run," says Sandy Berendes. "One may be a natural at picking paint colours, while the other excels with lighting placement."

For some couples it may make sense to divide the practical jobs from the creative, leaving one partner to oversee the technical details while the other steps in when it comes to the design and finishing of the house. This is seen as the more traditional route. "Clichéd as it may be, women take a more thorough interest in the practical functioning of the house and its internal appearance — few men take a stand ➡





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on this," says Alastair MacIntyre. "In balance, men, particularly with evermore sophisticated smart home systems, energy and servicing technology and material choices, take more of an interest in these aspects."

Should you both be willing to play an equal part in the management of the build process however, without stepping on any toes, it can be sensible to review the tasks to be carried out at each stage (you can find more on this in our step-by-step guide to self-build on p.190) and divide these equally, taking into account your other commitments such as work, family life, etc. If you intend to take a certain amount of time off work and want to be present for the early stages of the build then you could designate yourself to be responsible for the foundations, superstructure and roof stages, with your partner then taking over exterior/interior fittings, first and second fix, drainage, and drylining stages — then coming together to work on the decorating as a team.

"If the husband takes one area of the house and the wife takes another area, like the kitchen, and they both design and decorate these how they want, then they both have their own flair and ideas brought together," says Sandy Berendes. Of course, tastes can vary — so don't go painting a room orange without running it by your partner first!

## REMAIN EQUAL

There's a likelihood that you are not going to agree on everything. From the design to the construction and the finishing of the house, you will need to discuss your wishes, thoughts, ideas and opinions before breaking ground.

It's often thought that the architect/designer takes on the role of marriage councillor during the early stages of a building project, when both parties have ideas of what they want, and which can both be very different. One may want a sleek, contemporary design with open plan spaces, interesting use of cladding materials and large proportions of glazing; the other might have a different design in mind that is more traditional in style. You also need to discuss how each of you will go about using spaces within the house and finding a happy medium. Something as trivial as the placement of a kitchen island could wind up in a battle of wits. "In my experience, one partner has a stronger 'mind's eye' of the final building," explains Alastair MacIntyre.

Discussing your attitudes towards money will also be a difficult but necessary discussion, particularly if one of you earns significantly more than the other. How do you remain equal partners when one of you cannot financially match the other? For the person investing more money, you don't want to make your partner feel inferior, neither do you want to assume power as a result and leave your partner out of the decision-making process. This will only lead to resentment.

Finally, you both need an equal desire to do the project in the first place. There are some cases where the man will be pushing to self-build a home while the woman would not usually consider this route or share a willingness to be a part of the process. Remember that it is a shared venture and if you're both going to live there, then you both need to be on board from the outset.

## TAKE A BREATHER

It sounds obvious, but with all the stress of a building project, it is easy to forget to make time for your relationship. Life gets put on hold and without realising you could find yourself isolating your partner in a bid to get the walls skimmed, missing dinner dates due to a leaky pipe, or even worse forgetting an anniversary as you're too busy being stuck in 'house mode'.


"Conflicts often arise with couples because they are totally consumed with the project. They don't have a life away from the tasks at hand. To prevent disagreements or overload it's as simple as taking a break. Take a break away from the day-to-day stress of your build or remodel," explains Laura Longville. "Regroup together as a couple. Spend time doing hobbies or activities together. Do nothing. If you're like most couples doing a self-build, your life is consumed with your project. Remember that it's OK to take a breather."

Find time in the week to dedicate your attention to your partner — either a couple of hours at the end of a day, or you may choose to take Sundays 'off' — where discussions about the house are off-limits and instead you focus on each other.

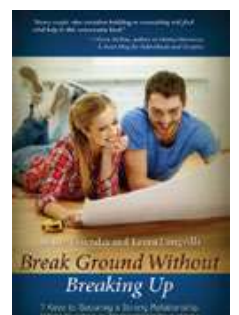
## ASK FOR HELP

Nobody ever said this would be easy. There will be times during the project when you will simply not be able to carry all of the weight and you are going to need to rely on others. This is particularly the case if you have children, and you might need to call on family members to help with babysitting and even assistance with daily chores such as the cleaning and ironing which have fallen by the wayside if you're having to spend more time than you'd like on site. "Asking for help from your friends and family can go a long way to reducing stress," explains Laura Longville. "This could help you get the work done faster and enable you to have fun. Get professional help too. Hire someone to complete a part of the project you don't want to do or don't feel qualified to do."

## KEEP YOUR FOCUS

When the going gets tough — and it will — remember why you wanted to build with your partner in the first place — you want to share this experience with them and end up with a house that is individual to you and you both can share and make memories in. Make sure you also refer back to your original plans to check that in all the chaos of the construction process that you are still going to end up with the house you originally both envisioned and haven't gone off track. Good luck! 

● Laura and Sandy's book *Break Ground Without Breaking Up: 7 Keys to Securing a Strong Relationship While Building or Remodelling Your Home* is available to buy on Amazon for £9.94, or download the Ebook direct from [buildremodelforcouples.com](http://buildremodelforcouples.com)



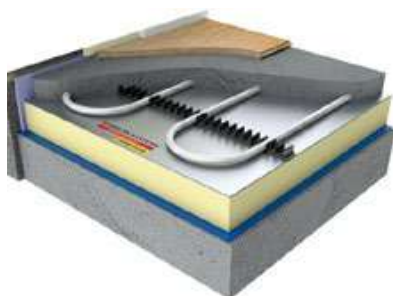
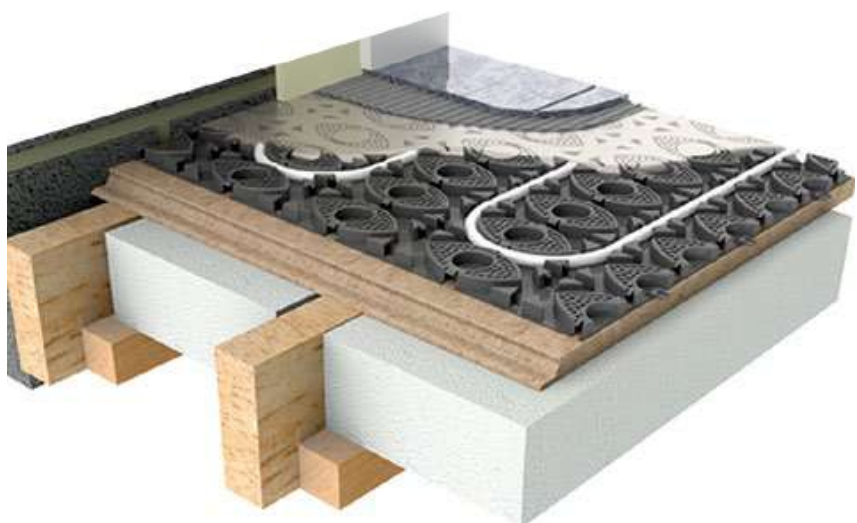


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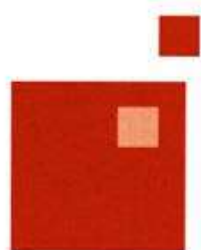


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# 10 Ways to Make Sure You Stay on Budget

David Snell reveals the best ways to ensure you end up spending what you had originally intended on your project



## DAVID SNELL

A 13-time self-builder, David has been building homes for 50 years and is the author of *Building Your Own Home*

Some might think that the most important element in a self-build or renovation project is the plot or house. And, indeed, they would be right to an extent — without that original opportunity, there can be no construction.

But, in fact, the most important part of any project of this nature is the budget, without which no viable move can even be made to secure the land or house. Once the opportunity has been identified and its costings and price are known, then their deduction from the overall budget will dictate what is left to form the building budget.

There are very few self-build or renovation financial disasters, simply because of the cushion of profit that most engender on resale. But there are cases where costs have been allowed to run ahead of budget, which make occupation of the new home difficult — forcing the erstwhile self-builders or renovators to sell up as soon as the project finished.

In order to avoid financial disasters occurring, here are 10 tips to take notice of and bear in mind at all times:

### Design must start with the budget

Any wishlist presented to your chosen designer must have, at the very top of that list, exactly what the build budget is and it should be made clear from the outset that any plans drawn on your behalf must be capable of being built within and for that budget, if they are to be considered as fit for purpose. Plans which demonstrably fail to adhere to this criteria should not be paid for and you should consider how to best proceed — if necessary, moving on to a designer who can more clearly show that they understand the budget's importance.

### Choose designers who understand costs

Only work with designers who can demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of costs. It's all too easy to get carried away with esoteric and grandiose design concepts, which will have a knock-on effect on costs. Yet that doesn't mean that the self-builder or renovator with budget restraints always has to put up with the boring or mundane designs. There are many ways of achieving that wow-factor without necessarily incurring significant extra costs.

What one must avoid is the total disconnect between design and costs that can lead to a whole lot of work, plans and money ending up in the bin. If you suspect that your designer or architect is not paying attention to costs and the budget, then cut loose from them as quickly as possible.

### Keep on budgeting

The budget is not a one-off, fixed thing. You don't work out your budget and then simply trust that an evolving design, which may have seemed financially practical at the beginning, will continue to be so at its climax. At each stage of its evolution, advice should be sought to make sure that the project is staying on budget — and if necessary a change management process put in place to formalise its impact on the cost plan.

Things are going to change, even after what you may have thought were the final plans. Planners might insist on changes. Helpful interested parties may suggest alterations, many of which could make the building more attractive or more valuable. However, each time there is a change, it must always be related back to the original costs and the budget — if something goes up, then something else must come down.

### Keep cost savings in the kitty

If you make a saving on one aspect of the build, don't always rush out to spend it in making the building bigger or by choosing more expensive external materials.

Instead, save it and use it — if it's still available in the later stages of the project then you have the option to spend this on better internal fittings such as kitchen units, sanitaryware and flooring, once the principal costs have been expended.

Having that money 'in the kitty' might also be of considerable help if something

**"You might want to consider splitting the project..."**



## **“Always insist on any extras such as fitted wardrobes being properly costed and agreed in writing before they are enacted”**

unforeseen goes over budget. The chances are that most cost differentials are likely to be against you rather than for you — so make sure you pocket the ones that come in under budget.

### **Always add a contingency**

Something is bound to happen during the build that may throw your costs out. You need a contingency to take care of the unforeseens on site. Contrary to most perceptions, a contingency is not normally used up in one or two disasters, but is instead used in the gentle and general creep in prices as each trade progresses. If the ground is a bit soft you'll have to dig deeper. Digging deeper means more time excavating. It means more soil away and it means more concrete in the foundations. A few more power points, underfloor central heating instead of radiators, a better kitchen or bathroom, that's where the money goes.

On most sites a contingency of 10% is usually sufficient. On a sloping site, on bad ground or where there's a basement, then 20% might be a better amount.

### **Get definitive costs as soon as possible**

You can't get definitive costs at the initial drawings stage. All you can do at that point is to rely on professional opinion, your own calculations with respect to the build cost tables published in the magazine (on page 170; there is also a calculator online) and, perhaps, the judgement of a friendly builder who's prepared to give you a rough estimate based on their experience.

As soon as you've got dimensioned or scalable drawings, arrange for one of the estimating companies (such as Estimators Online) who work within the industry to prepare you a full costing breakdown, listing all of the costs for labour, plant and materials. This is invaluable. It will, of course, demonstrate to you that you are on budget. But it will also be a formidable tool in negotiating prices with labour, builders and suppliers.

An alternative would be to send the drawings off to a quantity surveyor, but that's likely to be a much more expensive option and the resulting information might not be directly relevant to a self-build or renovation project.

### **Be prepared to go back to the drawing board**

Nothing is sillier than pursuing plans for a building that you can't afford to build. If your constant re-evaluation of the costs and budget prove that this is the case, don't bury your head in the sand. Bite the bullet and call a halt. If your strictures about budget have been ignored by the architect or designer, then you should be quite within your rights not to pay for the work done. In which case all you'll have lost is time.

If the costs have increased beyond the budget due to your demands and unsustainable aspirations then you are culpable in your own misfortune. To proceed without funds will only lead to heartache and frustration. Listen to the advice and start the

design process again — the extra few thousand pounds now will save you much more later on.

### **Watch out for extras**

It is not unusual for extras to the original contract to cost 40% or more. If you don't watch out and you let things slide without checking prices, you could be in for a very nasty shock at the end of the project.


Always insist on any extras, such as fitted wardrobes, more power points, garden walls etc., being properly costed and agreed in writing before they are enacted. When you then get the prices for the extras, relate them to your overall budget before commissioning them. If trades or a builder does things differently, just because they thought it would be better, without your prior agreement then you're under no obligation to pay for them if they cost more.

### **What if prices come in slightly higher than you'd hoped?**

If you had hoped to get a builder to do the whole job and the prices you're getting prove to you that it is not going to be possible, then you might consider employing direct or subcontract labour for the various trades, thus cutting out the builder's profit. It might involve you in more work and a greater responsibility on site, but if it gets you the home you want within your budget, then it's well worth consideration. The build cost table in the magazine will show you that savings of between 15% and 20% are achievable by doing this.

On the other hand, if costs are still in excess of your budget, even when you've adopted this new build method, then the only thing to do is go back to the drawing board.

### **Consider phasing the project**

Having to go back to the drawing board at this point really goes to show that you haven't paid the right attention to costs and budget. Nevertheless, in some cases, and especially if the project is intended as your long-term home, it might be possible to phase some of the work to fit in with your budget. Detached garages can always be built later; the expensive kitchen can wait a few years while you get by on a cheaper alternative; ditto with bathrooms. You might want to consider splitting the project into weathertight and fit-out stages, meaning that you can approach the management of these stages differently too — perhaps using a main contractor for the first part and managing the finishing trades yourself. 

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# » The Build Cost Calculator

## A simple cost-estimating guide for people building their own home

One of the most important aspects when planning your self-build or home renovation/extension project is working out how much it is going to cost.

This figure will depend on the size and shape of the house, the level of your own involvement, where in the country you intend to build, and the materials you're going to use. If you can make even rough decisions about these factors, then you can begin to work out how much it is going to cost.

As a very general rule of thumb, expect a building plot to cost between a third and a half of the end value of the finished house. The costs of building a house will then depend on the variables listed above. All building work is usually quoted on a cost/m<sup>2</sup> basis. For example, a typical new four bedroom self-built home is around 200m<sup>2</sup> (with 100m<sup>2</sup> on two sto-

reys) and usually varies between £900-£1,500/m<sup>2</sup> (although self-builders achieve costs between £300-£3,000/m<sup>2</sup>).

Renovation costs are more difficult to establish as they involve many variables, but allow at least £1,000-£1,300/m<sup>2</sup> for work. This, added to the cost of the plot/house and with a 10-30 per cent contingency, should result in less than the final end value of the house.

The table below, based on information from the Build Cost

Information Service (part of RICS), is updated monthly to help you work out a more accurate estimate (note, however, that these figures are for build costs only and do not account for VAT, which is not charged for self-build projects). There is an interactive online version at [www.homebuilding.co.uk/calculator](http://www.homebuilding.co.uk/calculator) which guides you through the process. **H**

### HOW TO USE THE TABLE

1. Identify your build route from the four options; 2. Identify your expected level of specification: 'standard', 'good' or 'excellent'; 3. Identify the estimated size of your finished house (either single or two/more storeys); 4. Choose your location; 5. Multiply the figure by your house size (the internal floor area).

		BUILD ROUTE A (DIY + Subbies)			BUILD ROUTE B (Subbies)			BUILD ROUTE C (Builder/Subbies)			BUILD ROUTE D (Main Contractor)		
SINGLE STOREY		Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent	Standard	Good	Excellent
>90m <sup>2</sup>	Greater London	1212	1402	1686	1283	1484	1785	1354	1567	1884	1426	1649	1984
	South-East	1063	1230	1479	1125	1302	1566	1188	1375	1653	1250	1447	1740
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	966	1119	1345	1023	1185	1425	1080	1251	1504	1137	1317	1583
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	924	1070	1286	979	1133	1362	1033	1196	1438	1087	1259	1513
91-160m <sup>2</sup>	Greater London	1100	1347	1750	1175	1426	1853	1240	1505	1956	1305	1584	2059
	South-East	974	1181	1534	1031	1250	1525	1088	1319	1715	1145	1389	1805
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	886	1075	1397	938	1138	1479	990	1201	1562	1042	1264	1644
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	847	1028	1336	897	1088	1414	947	1149	1493	997	1209	1572
161m <sup>2</sup> +	Greater London	988	1296	1626	1046	1372	1721	1104	1449	1817	1162	1525	1913
	South-East	866	1136	1426	917	1203	1510	968	1270	1594	1019	1337	1678
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	788	1034	1298	835	1095	1375	881	1155	1451	927	1216	1528
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	753	989	1241	798	1047	1314	842	1106	1387	886	1164	1460
TWO STOREY													
90-130m <sup>2</sup>	Greater London	1166	1349	1657	1235	1428	1755	1303	1508	1852	1372	1587	1950
	South-East	1023	1183	1454	1083	1253	1539	1143	1322	1625	1203	1392	1710
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	930	1077	1324	985	1140	1402	1040	1204	1480	1094	1267	1557
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	889	1030	1265	942	1091	1339	994	1151	1414	1046	1212	1488
131-220m <sup>2</sup>	Greater London	982	1189	1508	1040	1259	1597	1098	1329	1685	1155	1399	1774
	South-East	862	1043	1323	912	1105	1400	963	1166	1478	1014	1227	1556
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	783	950	1203	830	1005	1274	876	1061	1345	922	1117	1416
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	750	907	1150	794	961	1218	838	1014	1286	882	1068	1354
221m <sup>2</sup> +	Greater London	906	1160	1456	959	1228	1542	1013	1297	1627	1066	1365	1713
	South-East	795	1017	1278	842	1077	1353	889	1137	1428	936	1196	1504
	NW, SW, East & Scotland	723	925	1163	766	980	1231	808	1034	1299	851	1089	1368
	Mids, Yorks, NE & Wales	692	885	1112	733	937	1177	773	989	1243	814	1041	1308

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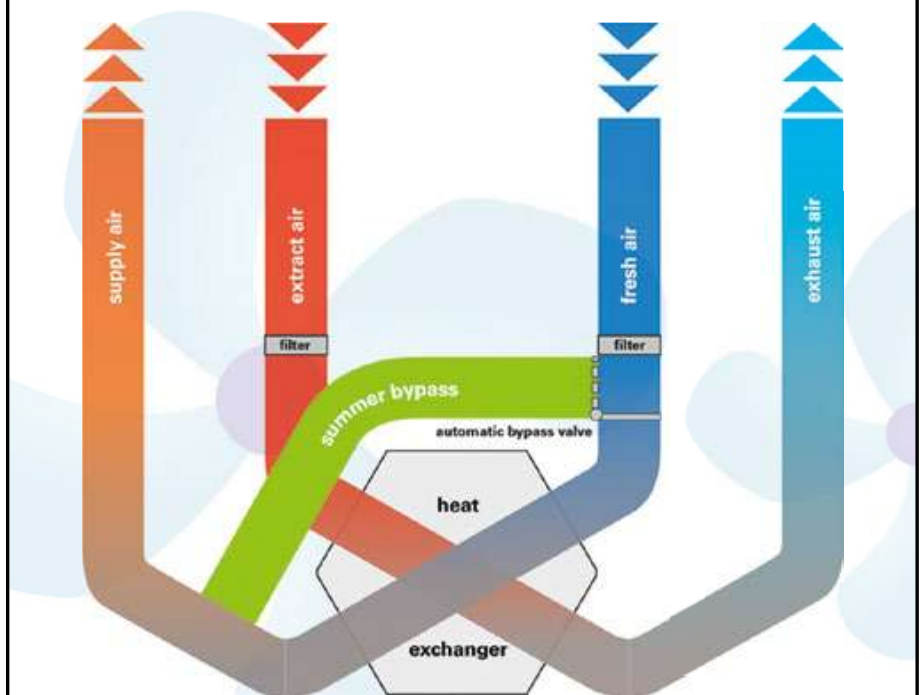
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# The Rebirth of Brick

Boring old brick no more — it is quickly catching up with timber and render as an exciting cladding option once again. Jason Orme explains why, and how to use it well



## INSIGHT



### JASON ORME

The Editor of *Homebuilding &*

*Renovating* for 11 years, Jason is an experienced self-builder and is currently renovating a 1960s home using a range of cladding materials, including brick

**I**t's a bit of a controversial headline, when you think about it. Brick, of course, has never gone away as the cladding material of choice for us Brits (well, except those of us who live in the stone belt, timber areas of East Anglia, or the parts of the UK where rough-cast render is the traditional style, such as in many coastal villages and across Wales and Scotland — but that's by the by...). Look around most of our cities, towns and villages and there is a rich tradition of brick houses and, of course, the vast majority of new homes are built using brick as the primary external facing. The problem being that many use, quite frankly, bricks in a poor way — either poor choices or poor design (more on which later), or both. Brick has become synonymous with safety, while at the more interesting end of house design render, stonework and most of all timber cladding are part of the lexicon.

Well, that's changing, and fast. A growing number of self-builders and renovators are responding to innovations in the brick industry — and a growing number of brick lines are responding to changes in attitudes to house design. Kilns are re-opening and there's a sense that the brick industry is helping to shape the future, rather than recreate the past. Across both traditional schemes (where smaller suppliers such as Northcot Brick, York Handmade Brick Company and Furness Brick have made a worthy name for themselves) and contemporary, brick is back and it is being used in more interesting ways. So, whether your extension or new build is aping period styles or at the cutting edge of house design, it's time to take a fresh look at brick. Here's why (and how).



### Below

This brilliant new home, designed by Tompkins Rygole ([tompkinsrygole.com](http://tompkinsrygole.com)) uses a Michelmersh handmade coarse-textured brick in plain red and grey-brown headers



SIMON KENNEDY; WIENERBERGER





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### THREE BEAUTIFUL BRICK HOUSES

**Top:** A courtyard home designed by John Lin in China is built out of two layers of brick, the external being largely decorative; **Middle:** A modernist brick home in Dublin (De Blacam and Meagher Architects) with a striking blend and wide 25mm joints; **Bottom:** A large new home in Northern Ireland built in Wienerberger's Mellowed Red Sovereign Stock



## Interesting New Bricks

There's no shortage of choice when it comes to choosing bricks, with over 1,800 lines available in the UK. In truth almost all of these, used well, can look great. In many cases the more plain the brick the more striking the overall effect — a particular trend since the 1960s has been to use plain blue/black engineering bricks on contemporary homes. Modern equivalents would be Wienerberger's Flashed Black or even a Staffordshire Smooth Blue. Even traditional-style red bricks can be reinvented in a contemporary context. The key is to avoid the waterstruck ranges (with a distinct rustic texture owing to the use of water as the clay is released from the mould) and look at more precise bricks with crisp arrises rather than softer, textured forms.

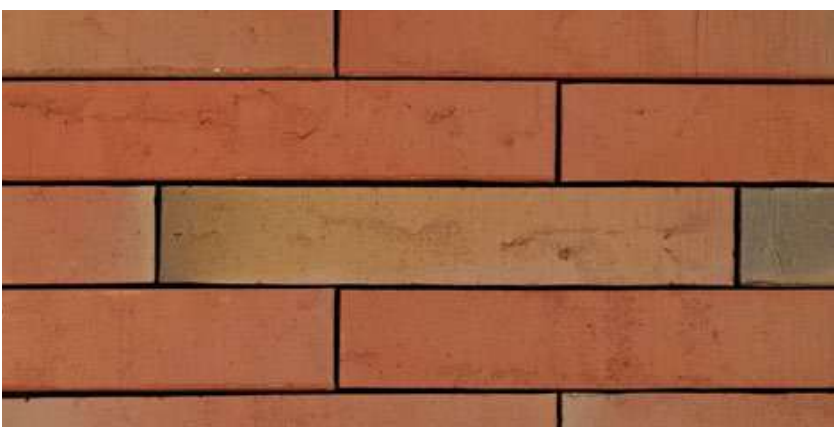
In addition to looking at the colour and texture, the format of the brick itself can play a key role (closely aligned to the bond). One interesting innovation here is the introduction of wider, more horizontal profiles that are beginning to be used, such as Wienerberger's Megaline range (below) which comes in a wider 288x48mm format (standard bricks are 215x65mm). The appearance is more horizontal in nature and is of interest to those building more contemporary homes (it's being used on the new Potton Passivhaus showhome, for instance).

Cladding in general terms has enjoyed a real revolution in recent years with concepts like GRC (glass-reinforced concrete) and copper cladding panels being used more often on homes — typically in unusual forms and using unusual textures. Bricks are beginning to catch up on this front, too — Wienerberger's Colour Fusion range, for instance, offers glazed bricks matched to any RAL colour.

One last thing to consider in terms of the choice of brick itself is the blend. Most contemporary schemes like to achieve uniformity of colour but there is a growing appreciation of the beauty of subtle contrast and so don't necessarily avoid the blends, which for years have been the sole preserve of those looking for a more rustic style. ➡



**Different Styles:** Wienerberger's Marziale range (top) is used to contemporary effect despite its texture and colour range; York Handmade's long-format Maxima brick used on a modern home; Wienerberger's new Megaline (bottom) is a wide-format brick

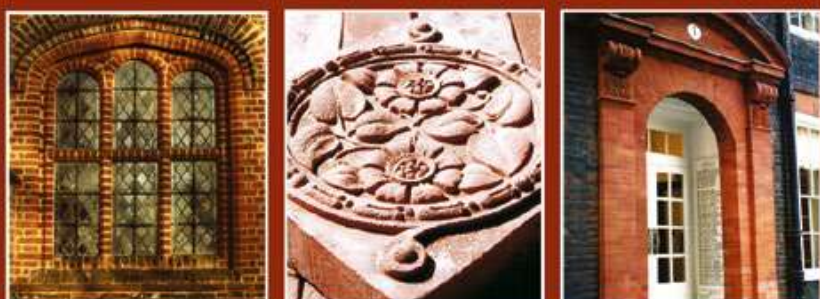


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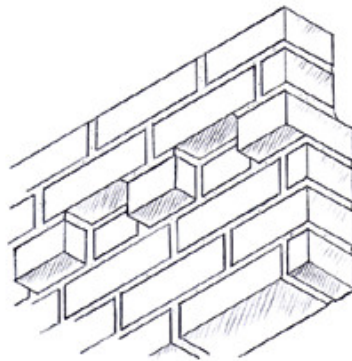




## Interesting Bonds

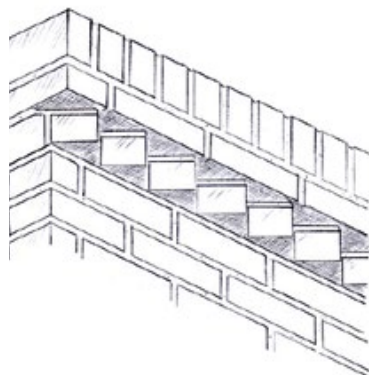
One of the best ways to introduce design interest into a brick elevation is through the bond (the pattern in which the bricks are laid). The most common bond you'll see on most new brick houses is the stretcher bond (where the brick is laid with its long, so-called stretcher face side by side). This bond was only really used en masse after the introduction of the cavity wall in the 1920s and so those looking to use brick in new period styles are wise to consider the English bond (alternate rows of stretchers and headers) or Flemish (where each row alternates between stretchers and headers).

There are, however, a range of bonds that are beginning to be used more frequently. The stack bond (where stretchers are laid one above the other, as opposed to offset in a traditional stretcher bond) is a mainstay of the contemporary home, often seen on blue/black bricks. However, bolder designers might consider more niche traditional bonds such as the three quarter bond (a stretcher pattern where the offset is minimal). The whole point being that the way the bricks are laid is just as important as the choice of brick itself — ignore the bond at your peril. ➡



### Right: Feature Bonds

Dentil (top) and dogstooth (bottom) courses can add huge levels of interest, shadow and texture to flat brick walls



### Above: Brick Gets Modern

A traditional multi-blend stock with interesting courses has been used on this contemporary lakeside house; Wienerberger's Platinum White Tovara on a contemporary home in Berkshire





## INSIGHT BRICKS

### Interesting Designs

Brick can be much more of a one-off feature than purely contributing to an overall effect — they can be an interesting bit of architectural design. An increasing number of architects are using off-piste patterns to make a statement, often within the wider context of a brick wall. These might be more conventional, such as a herringbone pattern or corbelling, or more daring individual designs, perhaps creating shadow and texture. Think modern dovetail and you're almost there. **H**

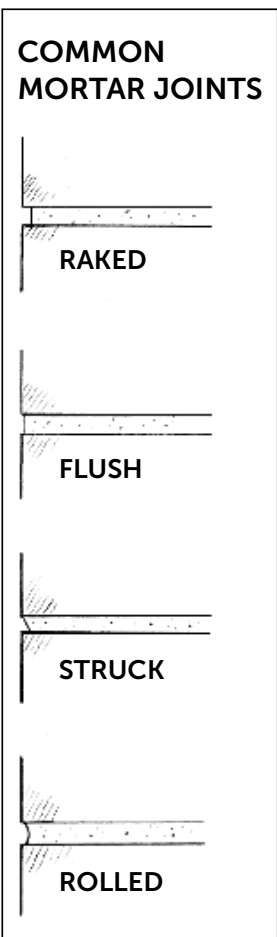


#### Old Brick, New Architecture

Designed by architect Darran Crawford of Line Architecture, this Belfast home shows classic Leicester Red Stock bricks from Ibstock used in a modern context

### Interesting Mortar

The mortar joint accounts for around 15 per cent of the overall brick wall covering — so it's important to get it right. A recessed mortar joint might look better with a contemporary brick while a bucket handle joint might better suit a more traditional-style home. Either way, make sure it works for your desired design.



#### Special Touches

**Top right:** Herringbone pattern using bricks from Bovingdon; **Right:** Thin mortar joints on a new build traditional home (Alex Oliver Associates); **Above:** Special shaped bricks create a great texture on a contemporary dwelling



TOP: DONAL MCCANN C/O DARRAN CRAWFORD; TOP RIGHT: BOVINGDON BRICK; SIMON MAXWELL; MIDDLE: BDA



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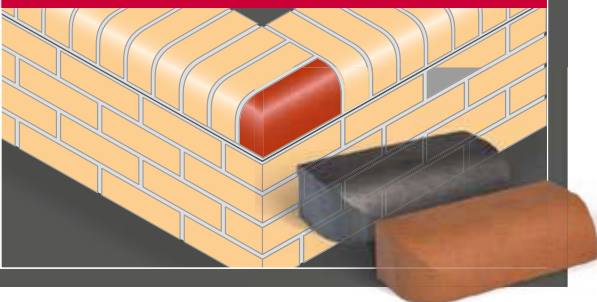
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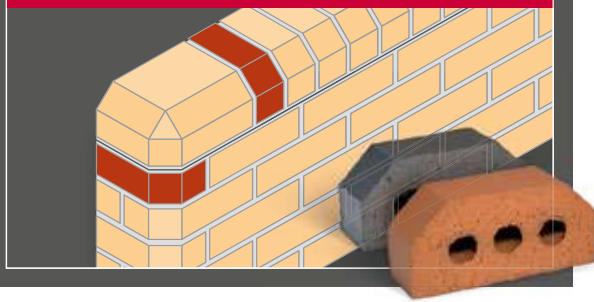
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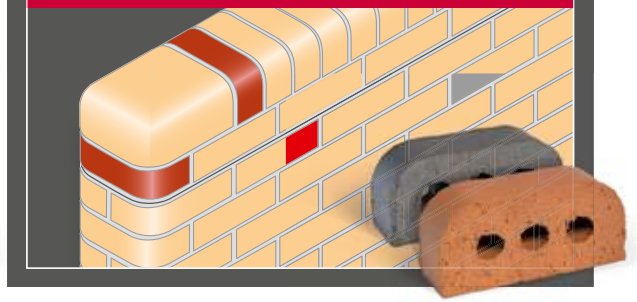
BN.10.2 Bullnose External Return On Edge



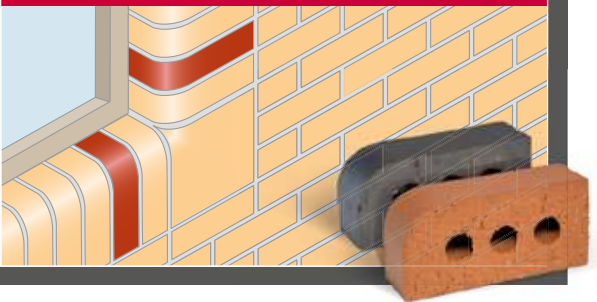
AN.6.2 Double Cant



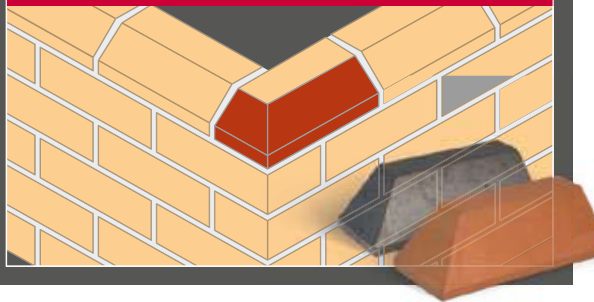
BN.2.2 Double Bullnose



BN.1.2 Single Bullnose



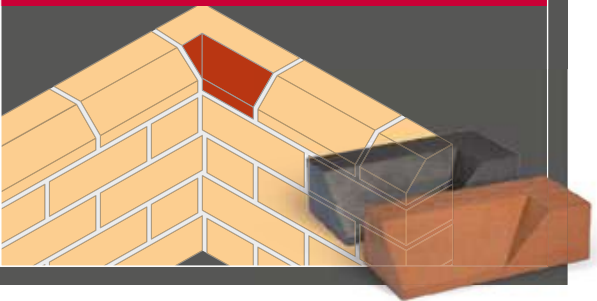
PL.7.1/PL.7.2 Plinth External Return



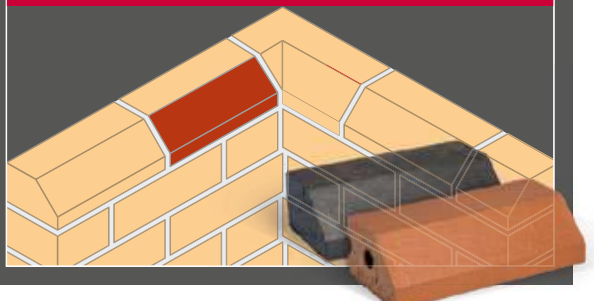
AN.1.2 45° Squint Brick



PL.4.1/PL.4.2 Plinth Internal Return



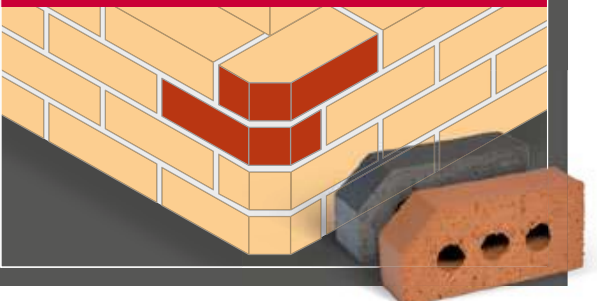
PL.3.1/PL.3.2 Plinth Stre



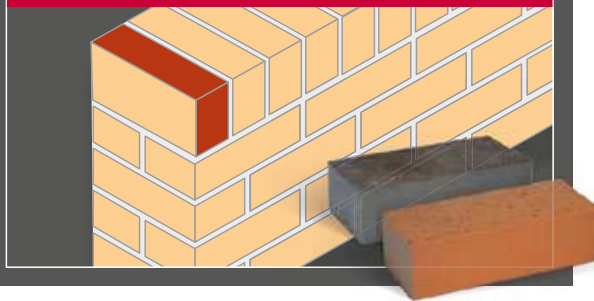
PL.2.1/PL.2.2 Plinth Header



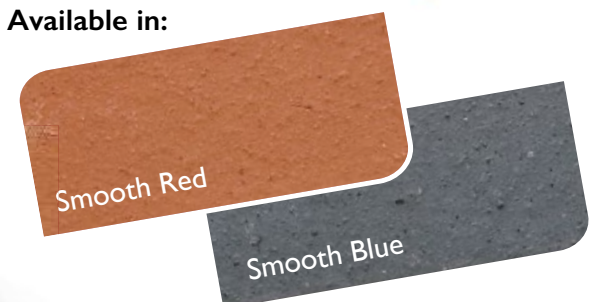
AN.5.2 Single Cant



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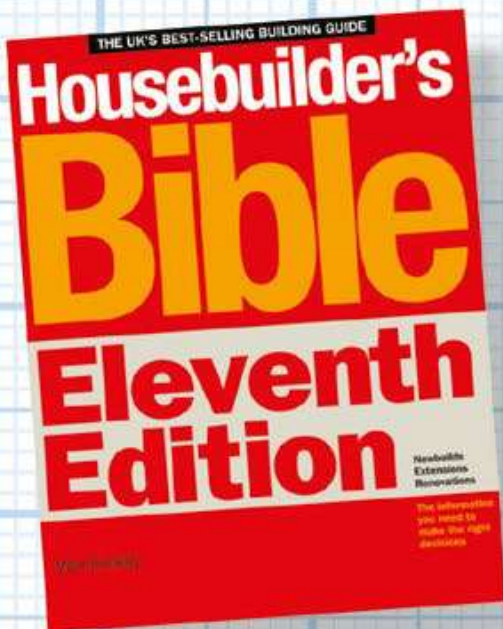


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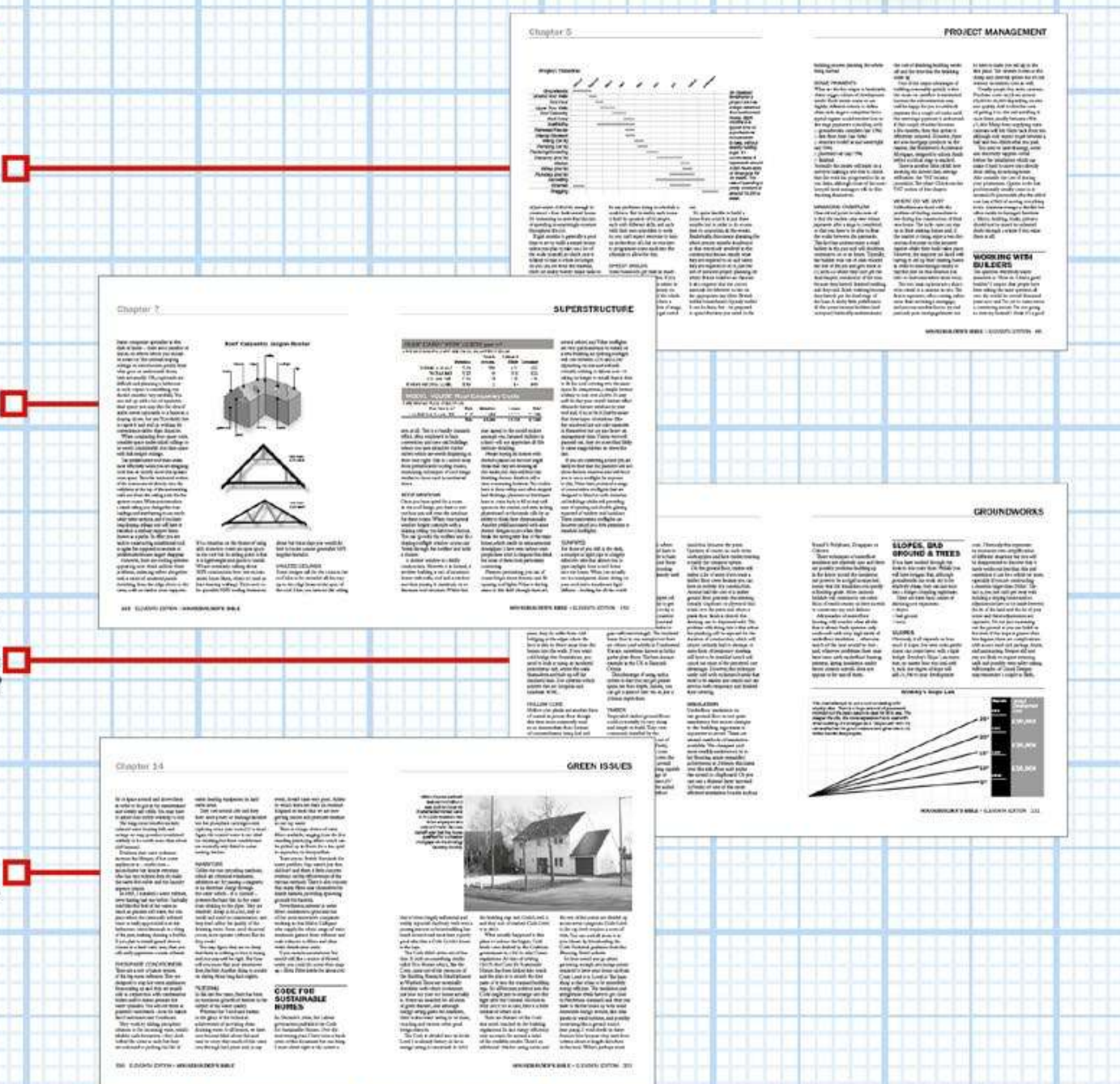
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# How to Insulate a Dormer Window

Dormer windows have traditionally been considered difficult to insulate to a high level. Adrian Pargeter discusses how vacuum insulated panels can provide a solution



**ADRIAN PARGETER**  
Adrian is Head of Marketing and Product Development at Kingspan Insulation and is one of the UK's leading experts on insulation

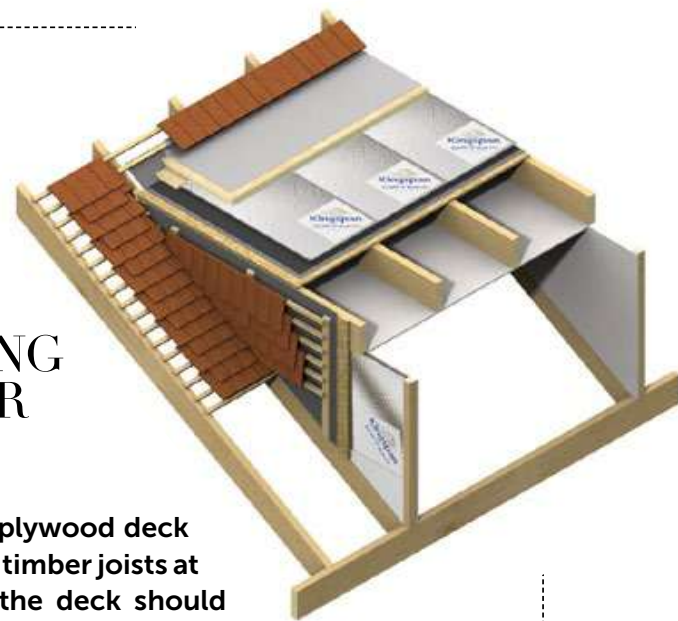


ALL IMAGES: KINGSPAN

**D**ormer windows are an ever-popular choice, enabling homeowners to make the most of their loft space, whether they are renovating or self-building. This feature can add distinction and character to a home's external appearance, along with space and light to attic rooms within. However, they are notoriously difficult to get right when it comes to insulation — given their complicated designs and small build areas it can be a fiddly job to ensure a dormer is correctly specified and installed, which can in turn result in a distinct weak spot in an otherwise highly efficient house. So, how do you get dormer insulation right?

**Some buildings would be better suited to a slimmer solution**

## INSULATING A DORMER ROOF



● Using a typical plywood deck above 50x150mm timber joists at 600mm centres, the deck should be dry and clean and graded to the correct fall for drainage. A vapour control layer should then be applied over the primed deck in accordance with the manufacturer instructions, ensuring the vapour control layers are adequately sealed with a minimum overlap of 150mm. The vapour control layer should also be turned up at the roof edge to a height appropriate for the waterproof membrane.

● 60mm vacuum insulated panels (VIPs) are then installed above this layer in a chessboard pattern with joints tightly butted, and high-performance PIR insulation infills of the same thickness fitted to fill any gaps. The infills should also be installed at the edge of the roof, or where penetrations are present, in strips no less than 200mm wide, to account for building tolerances and to provide a zone to allow for peel restraint mechanical fixing of the membrane. The insulation should be bonded using a proprietary adhesive system.

● 25mm high-performance PIR insulation infills should then be bonded over this as soon as possible and a waterproof membrane installed over the whole insulated area including any insulation upstands.



## INSULATING THE DORMER SIDES

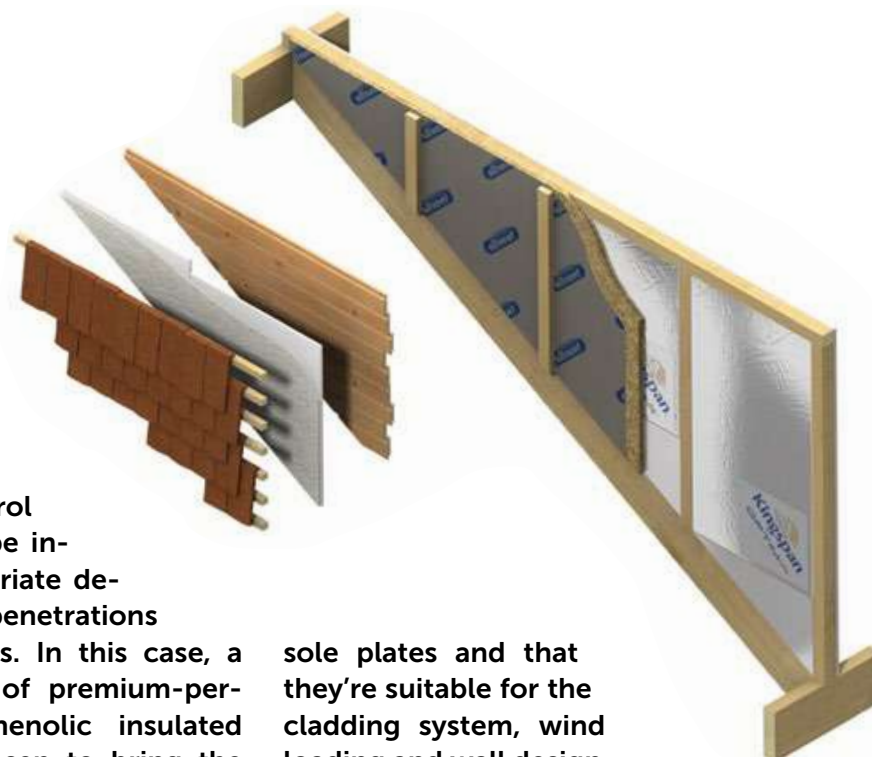
● Assuming 38x63mm timber studwork, 60mm VIPs should be fitted tight up against pre-installed oriented strand board (OSB) or plywood sheeting, ensuring the VIPs are flush with the outside surface of the studs. High-performance PIR insulation infills of the same thickness should be cut and used to accurately fill gaps around the perimeter of the cheek. Any small gaps which remain can then be filled with expanding urethane sealant. To keep the insulation in place, treated softwood battens should be nailed to the side of the timber studs, with care taken to ensure the VIPs are not punctured or damaged.

● A vapour control layer should then be installed with appropriate detailing at joints, penetrations and wall perimeters. In this case, a 72.5mm thickness of premium-performance rigid phenolic insulated plasterboard is chosen to bring the wall up to the desired level of thermal performance.

● Treated battens should then be fixed vertically to the external cheek wall structure along with a breathable membrane. Care should be taken to ensure the battens and fixings coincide with the studs, head rails and

sole plates and that they're suitable for the cladding system, wind loading and wall design.

● Timber cladding can be fixed directly to the vertical battens in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Alternatively if render or tile-hung cladding are used, the relevant render carrier or horizontal battens can be fixed to the vertical battens.



### Crophorne Autonomous House

Situated in the heart of the Worcestershire countryside, Crophorne Autonomous House goes above and well beyond even the strict heating and energy demand requirements of the Passivhaus standard. Almost all of the energy is provided by renewables, with space heating virtually eliminated and mains water and drainage replaced by rainwater harvesting and composting toilets.

While prioritising these sustainable principles, owners Mike Coe and Lizzie Stoodley were also firmly committed to maintaining a clear aesthetic vision for the property, including a dormer window on the rear north-facing roof (**above**). In order to bring this area up to the same level of thermal performance as the rest of the roof (it has an exceptional thermal performance with a U value of 0.08kW/m<sup>2</sup>), 300mm of premium-performance rigid phenolic insulation was installed within a plywood frame, forming the cheeks and roof of the dormer. A copper-clad plywood frame was then fitted outside this, creating a 300mm void around the insulation.

While the dormer in this instance sits well within the dimensions and contemporary design of Crophorne Autonomous House, some buildings would be better suited to a slimmer solution. As a result, it is worth exploring which alternatives could deliver the required thermal performance without greatly increasing the design thicknesses. One increasingly popular option is to use VIPs.

### Vacuum Insulated Panels (VIPs)

VIPs feature a microporous core which is evacuated, encased and sealed in a thin, gas-tight envelope. This design allows them to achieve the required thermal performance at a fraction of the thickness of even premium-performance insulation solutions, making them ideal for dormer applications where space is critical — such as dormer cheeks.

Take, for example, a typical timber dormer window construction designed to achieve a U value of 0.15kW/m<sup>2</sup>. Assuming 38x63mm timber studwork, 60mm VIPs should be fitted tight up against pre-installed OSB or plywood sheeting, ensuring the VIPs are flush with the outside surface of the studs. High-performance PIR insulation infills of the same thickness should be cut and used to accurately fill gaps around the perimeter of the dormer cheek. Any small gaps which remain can then be filled with an expanding urethane sealant. To keep the insulation in place, treated softwood battens should be nailed to the side of the timber studs.

A vapour control layer should then be installed with appropriate detailing at joints, penetrations and wall perimeters. In this case, a 72.5mm thickness of premium-performance rigid phenolic insulated plasterboard is chosen to bring the wall up to the desired level of thermal performance. **H**

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# Self-build Project Planner

However you're getting it built, you'll need to know how a house is constructed.  
Here it is, week-by-week — along with a checklist of things not to forget

## SIX WEEKS PRIOR

- Obtain quotations from service suppliers, pay them and book them
- **Organise warranty**
- Arrange site insurance
- **Inform all prospective tradespeople of your schedule**
- Construct lockable insulated box and fix water standpipe
- **Check lead-in times for main orders**
- Identify plant providers
- **Identify tipping facilities**
- Advise building control and warranty inspectors of commencement
- **Ensure electricity and water is on site (usually arranged months in advance)**

## WEEK 1

### PREPARE SITE

- Groundworkers create site access
- **Clear site**

**and strip vegetable soil; stacking material to be retained out of the way**

- Set up site hut and equip with drawings and safety equipment
- **Set up toilet**
- Secure lock-up/lorry container (hired in or purchased) to be positioned
- **Water board to bring supply to stopcock on boundary**
- Plumber to connect water standpipe
- **Surveyor marks out building on cleared site and transfers the lines to profiles well clear of any construction work**
- Bring in bricks and blocks and stack clear of future construction
- **Set up mixer station close to cement store and sand heap**

## WEEK 2

### FOUNDATIONS/ OVERSITE

- Groundworkers excavate foundations
- **Wait for approval**

**of building control and warranty inspectors**

- Position any reinforcement bars, mesh or cages in the trenches
- **Position any compressible material or slip membranes required within the trenches**
- Lay ducts for services to enter through the foundations
- **Arrange foot scaffold if necessary and shutter for any steps in the foundations**
- Pour concrete footings and tamp to level
- **Obtain approval from building/warranty inspectors to proceed**
- Bricklayers build up foundation blockwork to damp-proof course
- **Install cranked air vents**
- Install drainage exit lintels
- **Fill cavities with lean-mix concrete to level with external ground level**
- Bed and lay damp-proof courses, linking these with any Radon membranes or barriers

## WEEK 3

### START SUPER- STRUCTURE

- Groundworkers to dig service trenches and lay pipes and

ducts to proposed stopcock/meter positions

- **Load out concrete floor beams to each bay and position**
- Install drainage and vent pipes, proud of the oversite
- **Infill floor beams with blocks**
- Lay coursing blocks and position ventilator grilles
- **Brush grout**
- Arrange for building control/warranty inspection
- **Commence building superstructure**
- Install templates for future windows and doors, etc.
- **First lift of scaffolding required**

## WEEKS 4-5

### SUPERSTRUCTURE

- Bricklayers continue superstructure brickwork and blockwork

including work on any chimneys

- **Install and bed lintels including fireplace lintels**
- Install flue liners as work proceeds
- **Build in meter boxes for gas and electricity**
- Electrician to install temporary consumer unit within electricity meter box
- **Service suppliers to carry out their work to the boundary**
- Plumber to reroute water supply to stopcock position
- **Electricity providers to install meter and connect**
- Second scaffolding lift required
- **Arrange crane to lift first floor beams onto each bay and position**
- Position plasterboard batten clips
- **Lay infill blocks**
- Brush grout

## WEEKS 6-7

### SUPER- STRUCTURE

- Continue building superstructure to wallplate level

- **Third and then fourth lift of scaffolding required**
- Wallplate to be scarfed, bedded and tied down with proprietary wallplate straps
- **Warranty inspection sometimes required**
- Carpenters to build end trusses as templates
- **Continue building up gable ends and chimney**
- Additional lifts of scaffolding required at the gable ends
- **Plumber to fit lead flashings, trays and skirts to chimney**
- Plumber to install vent pipes and flashing skirts as they come through the roof
- **Bricklayers to top out and fit chimney pot**
- Bricklayers to point chimney flashings



WEEK  
8

## CONSTRUCT ROOF

⇒ Carpenters to sling roof trusses, and

trusses to be fixed down to wallplate

⇒ **All binders and bracing to be fixed at node points**

⇒ Layboards to be fixed to valleys

⇒ **Dormers to be constructed at this point**

⇒ **Fascia and soffit to be fixed together with any necessary ventilation grilles or strips**

⇒ Warranty inspection sometimes required

⇒ **Any roof tanks must be installed at this point**

WEEKS  
9-11

## ROOF COVERING

⇒ Roofers begin to cut and lay

undercloaking to the verges

⇒ **Roofers to felt and batten**

⇒ Tiles/slates to be laid

⇒ **Ridge/hip tiles to be laid and bedded**

⇒ Valley tiles to be laid, or fibreglass or lead valleys to be laid

⇒ **Plumber to dress down flashings and skirtings**

⇒ Decorators to paint/stain facias, soffits and barges

WEEKS  
11-12

## EXTERIOR & INTERIOR FITTINGS

⇒ Plumbers to fix guttering

⇒ **Window suppliers to fit external joinery**

⇒ Plasterers to carry out any external rendering

⇒ **Scaffolding to come down**

⇒ Plumbers to fit downpipes and connect to drainage upstands/gullies

⇒ **External decoration**

⇒ Carpenters to commence first fix by fitting door linings, building any studwork partitioning and fixing window boards

⇒ **Carpenters to fix plasterboard noggings and box in vent pipes**

⇒ Plumber and carpenter to liaise with building of any necessary stands in roof

⇒ **Carpenter to fix loft trap**

WEEKS  
13-14

## FIRST FIX

⇒ Plumbers to lay flooring membrane and insulation,

taping all joints and sealing up to the damp-proof course

⇒ **Underfloor heating (UFH) loops to be laid and fixed**

⇒ All first fix plumbing for hot and cold and waste within floor zones to be laid

⇒ **Internal gas pipework installed**

⇒ UFH pipework to be brought to manifolds and outlet positions

⇒ **Supply and fix company to pump in and lay level floor screed and leave for three days**

⇒ Protective hardboard/cardboard to be laid on screed

⇒ **Electrician to fix carcass wiring for lighting and power circuits together with all backplates**

⇒ Consumer unit/units to be positioned

⇒ **Wiring taken to external lighting points**

⇒ TV aerial/satellite cables to be installed to required positions

⇒ **Internal telephone wiring to be installed to required positions**

⇒ Home entertainment/smart systems/alarms to be carcassed

WEEK  
14

## DRAINAGE/EXTERNAL

⇒ Ground-workers to begin digging

the trenches for drainage runs

⇒ **Trenches backfilled to 150mm with pea shingle**

⇒ Drains laid to required falls

⇒ **Brick/concrete section manholes constructed, or purpose-made manholes, rodding eyes and gullies set in runs**

⇒ Building inspector to approve laid drains

⇒ **Drains haunched over with pea shingle**

⇒ Drainage trenches backfilled

⇒ **Work to connect to main sewer in road to be carried out by approved contractors**

⇒ Carpenter to finish boxings and noggings ready for plasterer

⇒ **Groundworkers to commence driveways and pathways**

⇒ Bricklayer to build any fireplaces and hearths

⇒ **Gas meter to be installed and connected**

⇒ Plumbers and electricians to liaise on all cross bonding and earthing

WEEKS  
14-16

## CEILINGS/ DRY LINING

⇒ Main staircase to be fitted by the carpenter

and protectively covered

⇒ **Dryliners/plasterers tack ceilings**

⇒ All external and blockwork walls lined with plasterboard on dots and dabs

⇒ **All studwork walls and pipe boxings tacked with plasterboard**

⇒ All joints and angles filled and scrim taped

⇒ **All abutments of differential materials jointed with mesh**

⇒ All joinery to be sealed internally and externally with mastic

⇒ **Dryliners/plasterers to skim coat all walls and ceilings**

⇒ Decorator to paint/treat backs of all skirting and architraves

⇒ **All roofing insulation to be installed**

WEEKS  
16-18

## SECOND FIX CARPENTRY

⇒ Carpenters hang internal doors

⇒ **Skirting and**

**architrave to be fitted by carpenters**

⇒ Bottom tread of staircase to be fitted, balustrading and handrails to be fitted, as well as linen cupboard shelving

⇒ **Final fit of loft trap door and ladder**

⇒ Timber floors to be laid by carpenters or specialists and protected

⇒ **Ceramic floor tiles to be laid by specialist tilers and protected**

⇒ Carpenters/specialist suppliers to fit/build built-in bedroom and bathroom furniture

⇒ **Kitchen units to be fitted**

WEEKS  
18-20

## SECOND FIX

⇒ All wiring connected to consumer unit

⇒ **Boiler to be positioned,**

**plumbed and then wired in**

⇒ Sink units to be plumbed in, earthed and cross bonded

⇒ **All sanitaryware to be fitted and plumbed in**

⇒ Radiators and towel rails to be fitted and plumbed in

⇒ **Underfloor heating loops to be connected to manifolds**

⇒ Electrician to check cross bonding and earthing to all sanitaryware, sinks, radiators, etc.

⇒ **Boiler to be wired in; control systems and room thermostats to be wired in**

⇒ Plumber and electrician to attend firing up and commissioning of boiler

⇒ **All pipework and connections to be flushed through and pressure tested**

⇒ Central heating to be left on 'test'

NOTE: All projects vary to some degree. This project is based on a house comprising: Strip foundations; Brick and block construction with insulated cavities; Ground and intermediate floors suspended concrete; PVCu external joinery; Trussed roof, tiled or slated; Gas fired underfloor central heating



## PROJECT PLANNER SELF-BUILD STEP-BY-STEP

WEEKS  
**21-23**

### DECORATING

⇒ Worktops, made from the previously taken templates, to be fitted

- ⇒ House to be thoroughly cleaned with all debris and dust removed to outside
- ⇒ Decorators to snag any holes, blemishes or rough patches on walls, making good
- ⇒ Internal timber to be sanded smooth or rubbed down with wire wool
- ⇒ Decorators to paint all walls and ceilings, mist plus two coats of emulsion
- ⇒ Internal timber to be knotted, painted, primed, undercoated and top coat glazed, or internal timber to be two-coat stained
- ⇒ Specialist tilers to fix ceramic wall tiles to kitchen and utility rooms
- ⇒ Baths to be filled, in order to settle, before tilers fix any wall/splashback tiles
- ⇒ Water meter to be installed

WEEKS  
**23-4**

### LANDSCAPING

⇒ Groundworkers or landscape gardeners to level the

- ground and prepare
- ⇒ Topsoil from storage to be placed where required, with extra shipped if necessary
- ⇒ Site hut to be removed or re-sited if intended for use as a garden shed
- ⇒ Secure site storage to be sold off or returned to hirers
- ⇒ Groundworkers to complete driveway surface
- ⇒ Patio slabs to be laid
- ⇒ Bricklayers to build any required dwarf/decorative walling
- ⇒ Lawned areas to be levelled ready for seeding or turfed
- ⇒ Approved contractors to complete any bellmouth and kerbing to road
- ⇒ Telephone company to connect
- ⇒ Contractors to install TV aerials and/or satellite dishes
- ⇒ All trades return for any snags
- ⇒ Carpets to be laid

WEEK  
**25**

### COMPLETION

⇒ Whole house to be thoroughly cleaned out

- ⇒ All windows polished and all labels removed from glass and appliances
- ⇒ All polystyrene packing to be removed from cookers
- ⇒ All stabilising bolts to be removed from washing machines/driers
- ⇒ Site toilet and any remaining plant on hire to be off-hired
- ⇒ Readings to be taken on all meters
- ⇒ Central heating switched to 'run'
- ⇒ Local authority to be advised of completion to arrange for Council Tax valuation
- ⇒ Energy Performance Certificate to be prepared and sent to building control
- ⇒ Building control final inspection and issuing of Completion Certificate
- ⇒ Warranty inspectors final inspection and issuing of warranty
- ⇒ Arrange protective covering for floor surfaces prior to delivery of furniture
- ⇒ Switch self-build site insurance policy to homeowners' policy 

# A Self-builder's Checklist

## Things to make sure you do — before and after you start

- ⇒ Ensure that planning permission has been obtained prior to commencement of works
- ⇒ Do not arrange to start work until all conditions within the consent have been discharged
- ⇒ Do not start work until/ unless a Building Regulations application has been lodged
- ⇒ Send off for quotations for services and utilities as soon as possible
- ⇒ When you get the quotations, accept them and agree a timescale for their work
- ⇒ If you can't get mains water in time, arrange a hosepipe with a neighbour or hire a bowser
- ⇒ Organise hire of any plant, lock-ups and toilets
- ⇒ Create accounts with local builders' merchants and ready-mixed concrete suppliers
- ⇒ Check lead-in times for materials and add them to your project planning
- ⇒ Check availability of chosen trades/builders and plan your project accordingly

- ⇒ Arrange self-build site insurance
- ⇒ Arrange warranty providers
- ⇒ Send in notice of commencement of work to building control and warranty providers
- ⇒ Ascertain where and how spoil will be disposed of
- ⇒ Identify plant hire outlets, including concrete pumps
- ⇒ Be aware that reinforcement may be required in the foundations. Mesh and bar are easily obtainable but made-up cages will have a lead-in time
- ⇒ Plan where materials will be stored on site
- ⇒ Set up the mixer station in a position where it can be replenished with sand and cement
- ⇒ Order the floor beams well in advance
- ⇒ Arrange the scaffolders in good time
- ⇒ Start to choose second fix items and kitchens etc. by at least week 11
- ⇒ Finalise electrical outlet positions etc. by at least week 13
- ⇒ Identify and commission an approved contractor for any

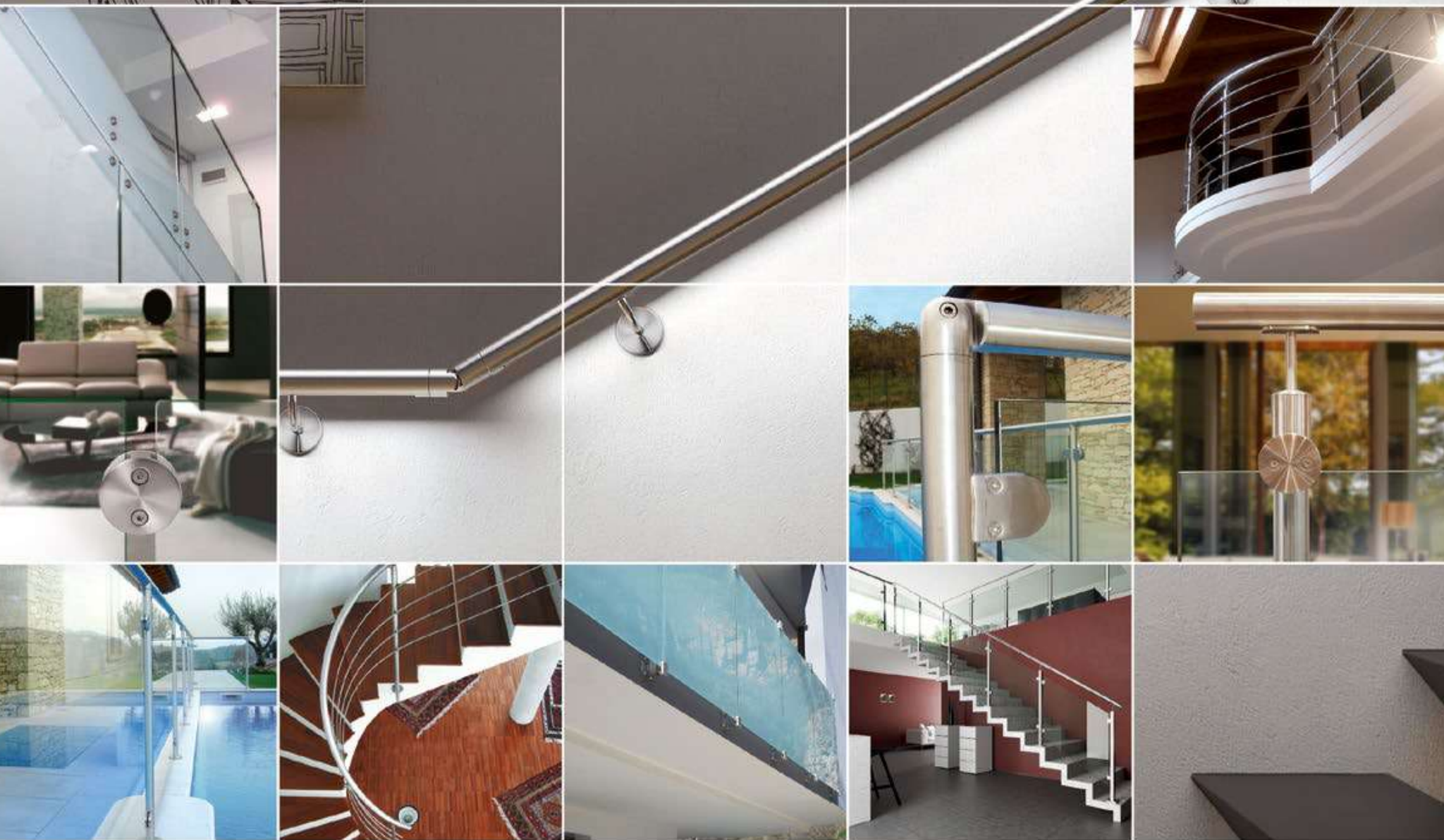
- work within the Highway
- ⇒ Don't forget that board or trestle scaffolding will be needed internally by the plasterers
- ⇒ Run central heating on a low 'test' setting when installed
- ⇒ Don't let the painters and decorators start or continue work in a dirty house — clean it thoroughly beforehand
- ⇒ Badger all trades to get back before completion to snag their work and hold final payment until they do
- ⇒ Off-hire plant and toilets as soon as practicable
- ⇒ Your last tranche of mortgage money will depend on the provision of an Energy Performance Certificate, a Completion Certificate from building control and a Warranty Certificate from the providers
- ⇒ Take meter readings before moving in and switch central heating to 'run' when moving in
- ⇒ Inform your local authority when you move in and arrange for a Council Tax valuation





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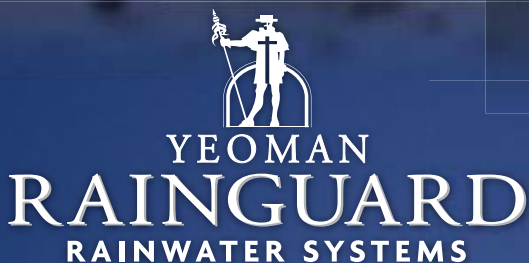
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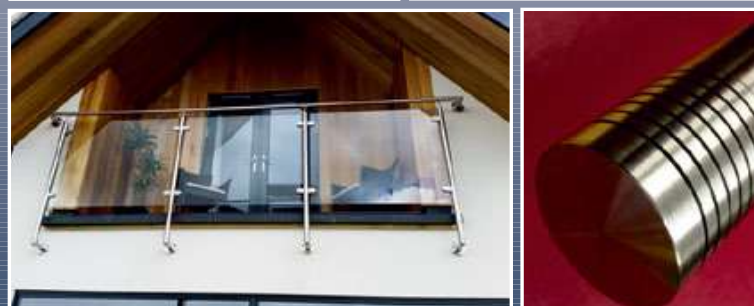
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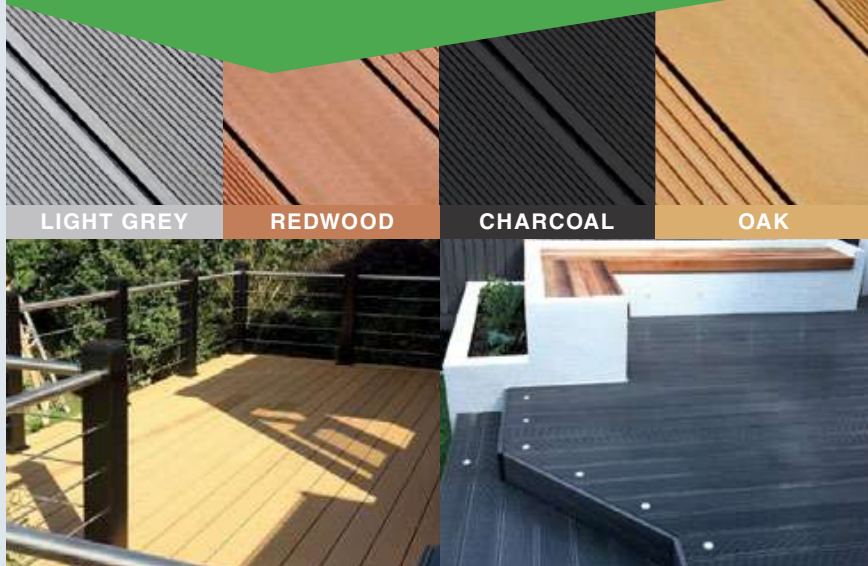
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**1** The Shaws fireclay Classic Double Bowl sink comes with a central dividing wall and is available in both white and biscuit finishes. Each bowl has central 3½" waste outlets to accommodate basket strainer or waste disposer and traditional style round overflows. Available in two sizes, 800 and 1000, these distinctive, heavyweight double bowl sinks require bespoke cabinetry due to their weight. [www.shawsofdarwen.com](http://www.shawsofdarwen.com)

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**3** Kennys liquid screed is perfect for under floor heating, it allows the screed to totally encapsulate the heating pipe leaving no voids around the pipes. Thus giving a much better performance to the heating system than a dry conventional screed. [www.kenny-group.co.uk](http://www.kenny-group.co.uk)

**4** Transport yourself back in time with JB Kind's Calypso door range - two new retro door designs and a unique glazing effect exclusive to JB Kind, have recently been released. Let light burst into your home with the Aurora 'sunshine' door (pictured) which puts a contemporary slant on a retro design from the 1950s & 60s. Plus, you'll definitely create a buzz with the new glazed Tobago door. The decorative chequered opaque glass design adds extra fun and flair to the FSC® chain of custody certified Calypso range. [www.jbkind.com](http://www.jbkind.com)

**5** First launched 23 years ago, demista™ heated mirror pads have been sold to hotels, specifiers, architects, house builders, and supplied through electrical wholesalers and bathroom retailers. The self-adhesive pads are slimline and easy to install, simply fix in position and wire in to the electrical system either through the lighting or a separate switch. [www.demista.co.uk](http://www.demista.co.uk)

**6** Guaranteeing correct damp-proofing delivery every time, the new Dryrod damp proofing rods from Safeguard Europe are the fastest, cleanest, easiest and most effective rising damp treatment on the market. The standard 180mm long rods are simply inserted along mortar lines at 120mm centres. This delivers the exact dose and application is totally consistent, making it easy to calculate how many to use. [www.dryrods.com](http://www.dryrods.com)

**7** Nuaire is a world leader in the design and manufacture of domestic ventilation solutions, having invented and developed many of the most popular ventilation strategies used today. Nuaire's dedicated Self-Build team will be at the NEC National Homebuilding & Renovating Show on Stand E176, for advice on your self-build or renovation project. [www.nuaire.co.uk](http://www.nuaire.co.uk)

**8** Rundum Meir ventilated garage doors in solid oak have been installed on new houses in Cambridge. The vertically slatted design met architect requirements for bringing light into integrated carports. Each garage door was made-to-measure ranging from 2200 mm to 2800 mm in height from solid European oak and is fully automated, allowing remote control. [www.rundum.co.uk](http://www.rundum.co.uk)



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8





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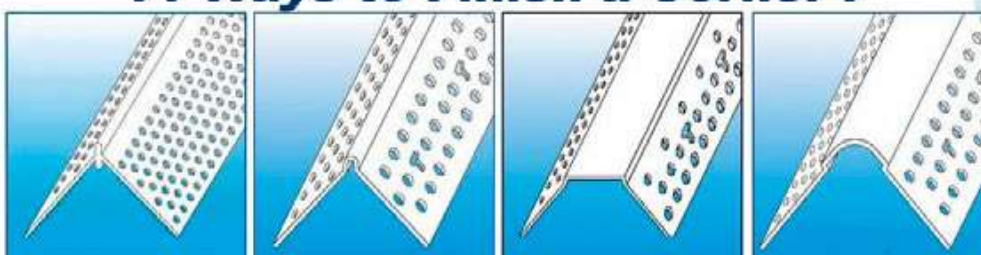


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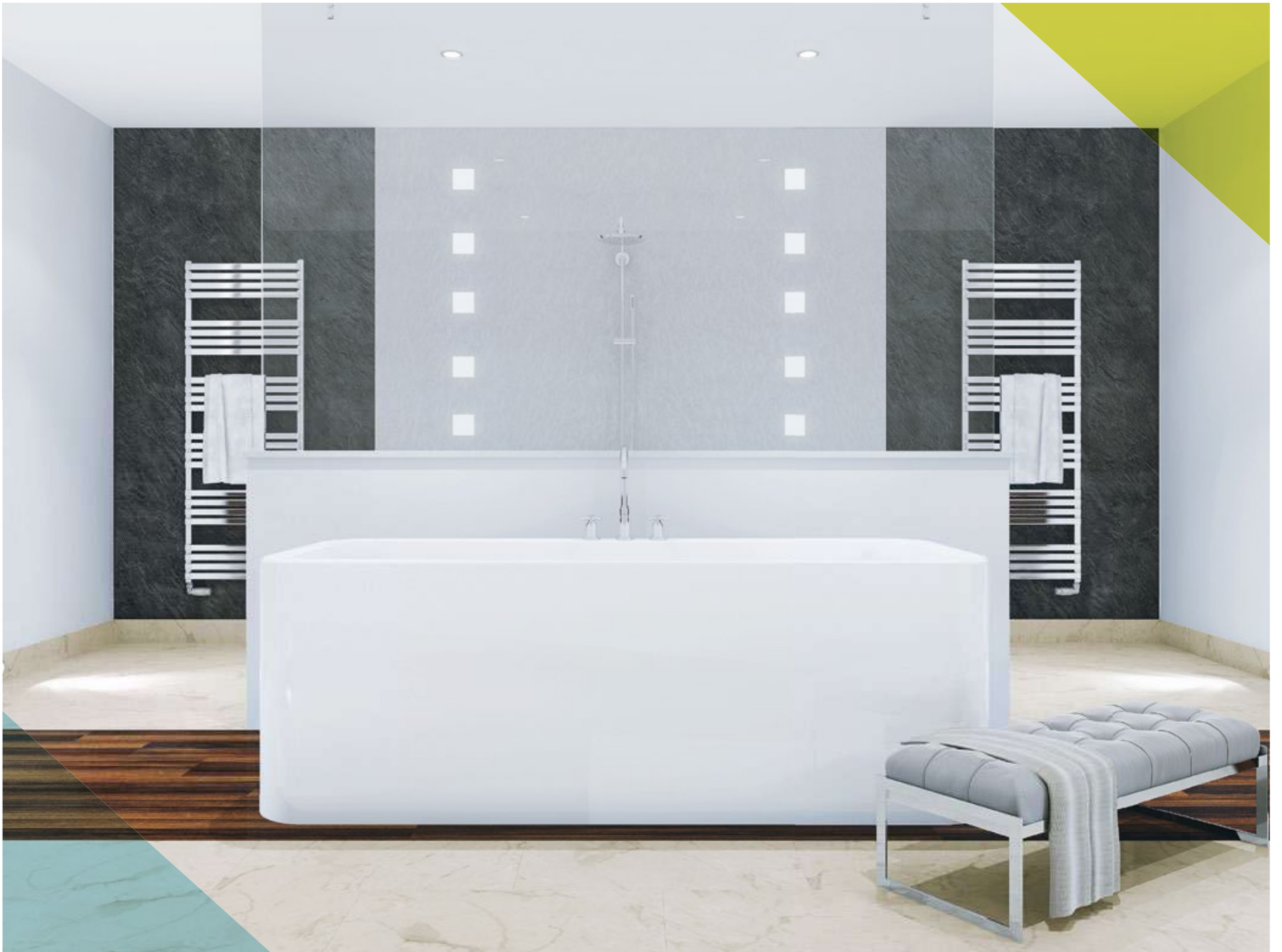




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# Corner Glazing


Architect Tom Williams shares one of his practice's favourite design tricks

Corner glazing is a great way of blurring the boundaries between inside and out. A plot will often be configured in a certain way; a client may want to orientate the house to face a particular view, for instance (as was the case with our Nicol Lodge project, above). The corner glazing here sees two junctions coming together to focus the view to one aspect of the garden and to open out on to a south-facing patio.

We sourced the doors from Sunparadise as they offered a solution where the structural corner post could be removed — when the doors open the whole corner is exposed to the garden, connecting with the outdoors. We worked closely with the

structural engineer, using steels to cantilever the load above. We also had to get the level thresholds right. We built up the patio, and the track for the glazing is recessed into the floor with a drainage channel below so that any rain is washed away under the patio and into the garden.

For a sleek, elegant look, sliding doors offer larger areas of glazing; with bi-fold doors there are more frames involved which can spoil the outlook.

My advice is to visit shows to see how the products work and whether they come with a flush level threshold for that seamless effect. Remember that frames make a huge difference too and if you're going for a large opening such as a corner unit then I'd recommend aluminium frames as they are slimmer. 



Tom Williams is a  
director at ID Architecture  
([idarchitecture.co.uk](http://idarchitecture.co.uk))





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